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20th Anniversary Issue

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Telos

A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought

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Telos
A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought
Number 75 Summer 1988

Table of Contents

Special 20th Anniversary Section

20 Years of *Telos* 3
Paul Piccone
The Hidden *Telos* 26
Robert D'Amico
Recalling *Telos* 36
Paul Breines
Our East European *Telos* 47
Sharon Zukin
Telos, 1968 and Now 52
Frank Adler

Articles

Weber and the Myth of Calvinism 57
Luciano Pellicani
The Limits of *Glasnost:*
Introduction to Likhanov's "Organized Crime In Central Asia" 87
V. Z.
Organized Crime in Central Asia 90
Dmitri Likhanov
Jameson and Habermas 103
Thomas Huhn
Simulacral Economies 125
Vincent P. Pecora
A Difficult Transition to Democracy 141
Juan Corradi
Argentina: A Blackmailed Democracy 148
Isidoro Cheresky

Notes

Rights and Writing in South Africa 161
Russell A. Berman
The Mind of Eugene D. Genovese 172
Paul Gottfried
Manfred Frank's Theory of Interpretation 180
Sabine Wilke

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Reviews

Bloch's Philosophy of Hope 189
David Gross

Searching for Justice 199
Robert Antonio

Romantic Liberalism 204
Stephen L. Newman

THEORY CULTURE & SOCIETY

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Special 20th Anniversary Section

20 Years of Telos

Paul Piccone

May 1988 marks the 20th anniversary of the appearance of the first issue of *Telos*. It is not clear, however, that this is cause for celebration. Unlike people who reach maturity at that age, journals are more like cats and dogs: twenty years of age usually designates not the flower of youth but incipient senility. Most new journals generally come into being in order to confront what are perceived as urgent cultural, political and social needs not being met by existing intellectual organs. As such, they tend to follow peculiar trajectories. Initially they seek to introduce alternative perspectives into a cultural environment generally seen as mired in conformism and unable to deal with the "new" other than by reducing it to mere extensions of the "old." These periodic injections of allegedly fresh ideas, however, either end up recycling even older and forgotten notions, or become rapidly integrated into that very orthodoxy they meant to explode from without. Thus, after a phase of preliminary self-definition, most professedly radical outlooks gradually degenerate into commonplaces. Institutional conformism subsequently re-absorbs them, and intellectual *rigor mortis* inexorably follows — irrespective of whether the no-longer-so-new journals actually cease publication altogether or stubbornly continue an inauthentic institutional existence rather different from their original intentions.

Unsympathetic critics may argue that *Telos* would not have been an exception to this general rule, had it not been for the fact that it never succeeded in finding any "respectable" institutional location. Along this line of reasoning, what probably spared the journal from normal academic corruption was the fact that it never had the opportunity to succumb to it. Thus, much like "philosophy, which once seemed obsolete," *Telos* also "lives on because the moment to realize it was missed." Yet the original project may have had a specificity which exempted it from the usual trajectory of ordinary academic journals. It was probably the only journal of its kind in the US that never

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received any foundation or institutional support and, with the exception of the initial founding subsidy provided by a student group, never pestered its readers for any contribution beside the cost of a normal subscription — which also always remained well below market rates. All journals of this type become the personal projects of the people involved in them. In the case of *Telos*, this has been all the more true since there has been an exceptional editorial continuity over the years. This unforeseen longevity, however, has necessitated adaptations both in terms of theoretical as well as thematic re-definition. As such, the history of the journal tends to exemplify, *in nuce*, the dynamics of American society in general and of the Left in particular.

Given its peculiar origins in Buffalo as the project of philosophy graduate students, *Telos* began as an attempt to revitalize American philosophy in the late 1960s by rediscovering European thought and Western Marxism. Although our concerns were very much in the tradition of earlier generations of American pragmatism (Dewey, James, Peirce, etc.) we had to tactically break with that tradition owing to the cowardly conformism of "really existing" American pragmatism at that time. Its apologetic position towards the Vietnam war, its rhetorical defense of an American democracy which clearly was not seen to be living up to its proclaimed ideals, its careerist and opportunistic obsessions, all contributed to create an intellectual generational gap which translated into a self-imposed exile to continental philosophy. Our critique had to speak a language other than that of our opponents, and this necessitated the resurrection of otherwise forgotten philosophical traditions. By and large, this strategy succeeded beyond expectations: two decades later Western Marxism and Critical Theory have become legitimate subdisciplines right next to the likes of feminism, black studies and post-structuralism, while whatever ruins of continental ideas have managed to survive the post-WWII Americanization of the European mind are now part and parcel of every American university's curriculum — but with unintended results. Far from precipitating the projected qualitative change in cultural life, a substantial de-provincialization of social consciousness and a more democratic and participatory political reality, Western Marxism, Critical Theory and radical philosophy in general have smoothly blended into the otherwise bland, jargon-ridden and hopelessly conventional framework they originally challenged. Whatever still passes for radical thought today has long ceased to be an alternative promising to revitalize or threaten anything: it lingers as a barely tolerated subspecialization for marginal intellectuals seeking to bypass traditional exclusionary mechanisms of an academic establishment infested through and through, like all similar institutions, with clientelism, nepotism and assorted run-of-the-mill biases. Today's academic radicalism prefigures, at best, only a modest academic career and a comfortable intellectual retirement.

In many respects, *Telos* has reflected and sought to address the pathologies of the broader social context of which it was a product. It came into being at a time when American culture was just beginning to recover from the debilitating

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impact of the anti-communist inquisition precipitated by McCarthyism a decade earlier. It was a period characterized by a conformist philosophical culture fearful of asking fundamental questions and obsessed with the futile quest to achieve "scientific" legitimacy by restricting philosophical inquiry to merely clarifying ordinary language, a social science reduced to a sophisticated version of ordinary market research engaged in compiling data for subsequent bureaucratic manipulation, and a shell-shocked mentality in humanities departments seeking, at best, to absorb the latest fads predominant in other equally threadbare disciplines. It is no accident that one of the early subtitles of *Telos* was "a journal *definitely outside* the mainstream of American philosophical thought." To ask new questions and consider alternatives required breaking with the prevalent worn outlook.

In the 1960s American society was still undergoing the last phases of that process of homogenization and depoliticization launched by the New Deal to create the docile exchangeable producers and passive manipulable consumers required by the fine-tuned, advanced industrial society envisioned by the tacitly accepted collectivist utopias. The political landscape was thoroughly conditioned by anti-communism in foreign policy and technocracy in domestic matters. The Right in general and the Republican Party in particular had grudgingly accepted New Deal reforms as practically inevitable and very difficult to reverse. Consequently, there was still considerable hostility toward that rising Goldwater conservatism seeking to vindicate the legitimacy of wealth and privilege by redeploying individualism and the traditional American distrust of state intervention. As an ideology, it had briefly gained the upper hand in 1964, but was able to gain hegemony over the American Right only with Reagan in the 1980s after the debacle of the Great Society and its aftermath — too late to reverse any of the by then well entrenched New Deal reforms. On the other hand, the anti-communist technocratic Democratic Party which ran the country for most of the 1960s, unsuccessfully sought to solve all problems by extending indefinitely the bureaucratic logic of the New Deal and otherwise managing a democratic version of that central planning being advocated by the more radical Left for over a century. The result was a major rationality crisis in the form of rapid bureaucratic involution.

As unintended regulatory products of the "Great Society," *Telos* and the New Left took this general framework as the starting point for any analysis, development and criticism. The particular project of de-provincializing American philosophy and culture was predicated on an analysis that saw technocracy generating an internal corruption and organizational stultification remediable only through increased participation, redistribution and democratization; and an uncritical apologetic anti-communism resulting in an ideological closure antithetical to an open society and a dynamic culture. The starting point of all this, of course, was that unmitigated military disaster that irreversibly conditioned our whole generation: the Vietnam war and the government's clumsy attempts to mediatize an otherwise weak or non-existing consensus. Within

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such a context, it was almost natural to gravitate toward a Marxism free of Soviet totalitarian encrustations and open to those traditions offhandedly rejected by the new "scientific" philosophical schools — mostly British — that saw the history of philosophy essentially as the history of folly.

The very composition of the original *Telos* editorial group — after the very first issue which still bore traces of pseudo-professionalism and theoretical aimlessness — is indicative. With the support of a slight majority in the Graduate Philosophy Association in the recently-established and well-financed State University of New York at Buffalo, the journal was planned in late 1967 and finally published, by pure coincidence, in early May 1968, on the very eve of the Paris explosion. The founding editorial group was composed mostly of students that only a decade earlier would not have been able to attend the previously elitist graduate schools. Only the massive expansion of higher education precipitated by post-Sputnik government restructuring and financial intervention had allowed the overwhelming majority of philosophy graduate students to pursue studies hitherto restricted to the eccentric offsprings of the "rich and famous."

The working-class and lower middle-class social composition of much of the original editorial group also explains why, from the very beginning, the journal took an extremely critical stance with respect to any form of "really existing" socialism and such intellectual travesties as "orthodox" Marxism. We knew the "proletariat" all too well to harbor any illusions about its alleged emancipatory potentials, and we had seen enough of how Stalinism functioned to be wary of any of its fraudulent claims —especially after the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Western Marxism, on the other hand, seemed free of these problems and able to provide the kind of perspective we sought: an outlook encompassing the highest achievements of Western thought, but at the same time still sufficiently engaged with life and politics to address a social and cultural immediacy beyond the reach of conventional academic wisdom. The works of Marcuse, Lukács, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, C. W. Mills, Goodman, Kosik, Adorno, etc. dealt precisely with these realities that seemed to escape "value free" sociology, analytic philosophy or the predominant objectivistic political science.

The Search for Theoretical Foundations

The rediscovery of European radical thought, however, was by no means uncritical. Under the influence of Marcuse's immensely popular *One-Dimensional Man*, *Telos* began to selectively dig up buried texts (which have long since become well-known in academic circles) in the effort to develop the New Left critique of technocratic domination and reification by vindicating a subjectivity becoming increasingly unattainable in a society well on the way of becoming, in Adorno's words, "totally administered." We began to search for forgotten and repressed texts we had occasionally seen mentioned in passing or referred to in stray footnotes. Thus we were able to track down through the

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local inter-library loan division (which at that time was surprisingly efficient) a copy of Lukács' *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* out of the Yale University Library, where it had been collecting dust for well over forty years, and we immediately began to translate it, only to find that there were already three different but never published English translations of it circulating in various circles. The first chapter had been published in English by Michael Harrington in 1956 in an obscure Trotskyist journal, a French translation by Axelos and Bois had appeared 10 years earlier, Piana's Italian translation was just coming out (with a new introduction by Lukács himself), and even the German original was scheduled to resurface in a Luchterhand edition. Understandably, we felt in good company in this project of cultural reconstruction.

While our project seemed to be well in tune with most similar European efforts, the same could not be said of the latest trends in Paris and London to reconstitute Marxism along surprisingly crude Althusserian lines. When in 1968 *New Left Review* first introduced Althusser in English — an exceptionally poor article on over-determination which we had read in an earlier issue of *La Pensée* (an organ of the French Communist Party we paid particular attention to, thanks primarily to the efforts of one of our Stalinist mentors who never stopped trying to turn us into orthodox Marxists: the late Mitchell Franklin) we had already taken a clearcut position on the matter: Althusserianism was nothing but a misguided effort to re-legitimate Stalinism for a post-Khrushchev political market. To its credit, *Telos* did all it could —not always successfully — to prevent the spread of this latest French fad in the US by publishing two or three relatively devastating and dismissive criticisms.

What made *Telos* immune to this attempt at recycling a "scientific" version of the old Stalinist Diamat was our long-standing involvement with the history and philosophy of science as a result of having to struggle against British thought, which in the 1960s had become hegemonic in most American philosophy departments. Early on we had identified the conservative character of British neopositivism in its inability to transcend the given, thus reducing all change to its further elaboration. As the old Lukács would have said: it appeared as a typical standpoint of passive rentiers and aristocrats in the declining British Empire who do not create but, at best, live on the achievements of the past. Analytic philosophy provided this approach with an aura of authority and respectability by reconstructing the dynamics and logic of science in such a way that the latter appeared unilinear, necessary and cumulative. If, in the natural sciences, the future could not be anything but a mechanical extension of its past, the same would hold for society, thus ruling out in principle the very possibility of qualitative change, which was the linchpin of our socio-political philosophy. In this respect, the demystification of science as just another extremely important, yet contingent, human project was high on our agenda from the very beginning.

It was no accident that the very first issue of *Telos* tackled head on the question of the *historicity* of the scientific revolution, not primarily as a major step in

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the attainment of a definitive knowledge of reality, but as a social and cultural event inextricably connected with the rise of capitalism and its ideology. Collingwood's historicism and Husserl's phenomenology were deployed to deflate the universalistic apodictic claims of neopositivist apologists who sought to use the prestige of scientific progress to legitimate existing social realities as irreversible achievements susceptible, at best, only to minor modifications and improvements. This is why the early issues of *Telos* were so implicitly concerned with Nagel's, Popper's, and Hempel's philosophies of science, against which we deployed Feyerabend, Koestler, Koyré, and Husserl. It was essential to establish the radical historical contingency not just of the natural sciences but of all manifestations of what Hegel had called the "Objective Spirit" in order to legitimate the possibility of a radical break with the given.

Unlike the currently fashionable post-modernism that has taken by storm English and Comparative Literature Departments in US universities more than a decade after similar ideas had been exhausted in philosophy, our attacks were never aimed against any all-encompassing "Western metaphysics" in order to legitimate some phantomatic "difference." Rather, following the late Husserl, the objective was to *re-ground* the Western tradition — not as univocal or necessary but as a contingent historical project whose success is not guaranteed by any theological or metaphysical necessity but by our will to realize and sustain it. Arguments from necessity and universality, whether going back to God, nature, or the structure of "communicative action," appeared as failures of will and inability to face up to our responsibility as *free* historical agents: the passive stance of impotent intellectuals unable to support their own positions without grounding them on external foundations whose ultimate nomological character has to be passed off as metaphysical necessity. Qualitative breaks (or revolutions — a concept that has nowdays practically disappeared from respectable intellectual discourse) are possible, but only within a tradition whose background presence allows the very determination of the change as qualitative. *Telos*' original radicalism consisted precisely in its insistence on the need for a qualitative break as a precondition for sustaining a civilization otherwise doomed to exhaustion and decline.

Given this general framework, it is clear why Althusserianism could only appear as a regression to positions which had already been defeated by that very "bourgeois" thought it claimed to combat. The alleged "scientific rigor" hid a fundamental arbitrariness grounded in an equally arbitrary class analysis whose ultimate objective was to legitimate the antinomies of the neo-Stalinist state. The distinction between "science" and "ideology" seemed crudely meant to checkmate "revisionism" out of legitimate discourse. The postulated incommensurability of theory and reality appeared as tailored to shield Soviet reality from the indictment of its own ideological claims. The emphasis given to "theoretical practice" could hardly disguise an attempt to legitimate Party hegemony, etc. We had waded through too much Marxist literature to overlook the immediate political cash-value hidden behind such

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pretentious ideological constructs.

The enthusiastic but critical reception of Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* and of Critical Theory in general was also related to the need to analyze the problems of post-New Deal American society beyond the fragmentary accounts provided by the social sciences, and to explain the deficiencies of the existing polity in terms of the debilitating impact of predominant social conditions. (Korsch and Gramsci, who were politically and culturally much closer to us and the New Left and who, at any rate, were never tainted by compromises with Stalinism the way Lukács was, turned out to be not as useful or susceptible to extrapolation out of their particular historical context precisely because of their concreteness and historicism). A qualitative change in social reality was seen as possible only if it was equally possible to generate a qualitatively different citizenry. Lukács' theory of reification — a brilliant reformulation of Marx's own more scattered account — both explained the political inadequacies of the *alienated* subjects of emancipation in terms of the logic of capitalist exploitation, and outlined how that very logic necessarily generated the conditions conducive to a reversal: the constitution of the historical subject-object identity necessary to the task. Combined with an articulation of the Hegelian dialectic to demonstrate how the historical trajectory inexorably leads to an emancipatory post-capitalist state, the Lukácsian account addressed exactly our eschatological political predicament.

Unfortunately, it was largely fiction which, even if read in the most charitable possible way, still culminated in the reductive Leninist apology for party rule and ultimately Stalin's one-man dictatorship. The problem of reification was formulated as historically specific and therefore transcendable, but only through the constitution of a fictitious *collective* subjectivity whose character could only be either totalitarian or mystical — two equally indigestible alternatives. The dialectic did unfold with elegance and necessity, but only on paper and as a sequence of abstract categories. Concreteness itself was defined in idealistic terms, in relation to an equally idealistic totality. There was no way the conceptual apparatus of *History and Class Consciousness* could in any way be used to grasp and resolve the problems of late 20th century American realities — or any realities, for that matter. This, of course, eventually became clear to Lukács himself, who did not hesitate to quietly drop it after 1928, independently of the embarrassingly crude criticisms it received from Zinoviev and the Party in general (which he had initially heeded purely on political grounds).

If Lukács' solution proved inadequate, however, the problem remained. It took the form of grounding the dialectic in more concrete theoretical foundations and reformulating the problem of alienation. This is where Husserlian phenomenology came in — not in the conformist fashion it had been marketed in the US by run-of-the-mill professional phenomenologists, i.e., as a "rigorous science" whose main texts were the unbearably boring *Logical Investigations* and the first volume of *Ideas*; but as the historical reflection on the fate

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of Western thought found in Husserl's last work, *The Crisis of European Sciences*. Phenomenology in this last text was deployed to provide the foundation for the dialectic in *praxis* and in the *Lebenswelt*. By focusing on the constitution of the subject and of history as a project, it successfully solved the problems which had doomed the Lukácsian project. The historical necessity guaranteed by the Hegelian framework proved to be a theological residue irrelevant to real events. In view of the plethora of cultures that had become known during the past century and a half it would have been preposterous to consider them all as earlier transcended phases of a triumphant and univocal Western civilization on the march toward totalization. Yet this realization does not necessitate the post-modern relativization of all cultures within an ultimately nihilistic framework which, by refusing to privilege anything, ultimately ends up legitimating everything and thus destroying all standards. Rather, it means that values are to be grounded on free choices in a world in which risk cannot be avoided by recourse to a necessarily fictitious universality and apodicticity. Philosophical constructs of this latter type invariably turn out to be sophisticated versions of hyposthatized particularity and ungrounded contingencies. We had learned too well that theoretical elaborations are irreducibly instrumental in character and should never be ontologized — which, however, does not mean that a determinate socio-historical project grounded in nothing more than a society's collective will to realize it carries any less normative weight than previous varieties pretending to express ultimate eschatological realities.

A Phenomenologically-Grounded Critical Theory?

This rediscovery of phenomenology as a philosophical foundation for a Marxism which, in its struggle against the idealism of "bourgeois ideology," had assumed that it could do without one altogether, was by no means original. That orthodox Marxism's regression to mechanical materialist, economistic, deterministic and even naturalistic positions long since transcended by that very same "bourgeois ideology," had been the subject of considerable discussion at the beginning of the century, after the inception of that "crisis of Marxism" precipitated by the Bernstein debate. After the first generation of Hegelian Marxists (Korsch, Lukács, Gramsci, etc.) failed to, or more precisely were prevented from, rethinking Marxism along highly problematic dialectical lines, the development of a phenomenological foundation had already been attempted by, among others, Marcuse in 1928, Merleau-Ponty and Tran-Duc-Thao in the early 1940s, and Kosík in the 1960s. Marcuse abandoned the project after Hitler came to power and Heidegger joined the National Socialist bandwagon; Merleau-Ponty dumped Marxism after it became clear to him in the 1950s that the project would never be able to escape the trappings of Stalinism; Kosik was eventually advised to stop dealing with such "revisionist" matters by the Czech secret police after August 1968; and the disintegration of the New Left forced us to deal with other issues. Our own position

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within universities which were no longer beseiged either intellectually or politically (other than by government-sponsored affirmative action) came into question and eventually resulted, in most cases, either in theoretical accomodation or outright expulsion for allegedly not being in the "mainstream" of artificially demarcated disciplines. Thus, while the project of a phenomenologically-grounded dialectic was never *formally* abandoned, it was set aside in favor of developing an analysis able to grasp recent history somewhat more comprehensively than had hitherto been done by the New Left.

In retrospect, this preliminary postponement, which eventually turned into a practical abandonment of the global philosophical project (it turned out to be an abandonement since we never bothered to go back to it), was a strategic mistake: the same problem of a missing philosophical foundation also turned out to be the Achilles' heel of the Adornian version of Critical Theory, which was eventually rediscovered in the 1970s with the publication of key texts such as *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *Aesthetic Theory*, *Negative Dialectic*, etc. Shell-shocked by the advent of Nazism and Heidegger's enthusiastic embrace of the most barbaric features of the National Socialist regime, Adorno and the rest of the Critical Theorists (Marcuse to a much lesser extent) came to associate, much like Lukács in *The Destruction of Reason*, phenomenology with Nazism *tout court*. It is thus no accident that Adorno's most embarrassingly uncritical book, written mostly in Oxford in the late 1930s and re-elaborated — but certainly not re-thought — in the early 1950s, *The Metacritique of Epistemology* (well before the full text of Husserl's masterpiece, *The Crisis of European Sciences*, finally appeared in 1954), ends up identifying Husserlian phenomenology with "another anachronistic form of positivism," a pseudo-science of essences buttressing decadent late-capitalist ideology.

The real phenomenological foundation that finally transpires in the late Husserl is not an arbitrary list of Platonic essences or a static ontology of Being — the Heideggerian travesty — but the *praxis* that the young Marx prefigured in the *Manuscripts of 1844* but later managed to reify and occlude in his account of the logic of capital. It is creative human activity that constitutes humanity as humanity and the world around. Thus all ontology, to the extent that it eternalizes what can only be historically specific, is necessarily reification. Science itself is a *project*, and so is Western civilization. The first remains an unfulfilled project that seeks to provide life with rational structures meant to guide human behavior, while the other aims at creating a kind of individuality which, although prefigured in the Christian notion of the *soul* and in bourgeois possessive individualism, also remains incomplete. Here Adorno's critique of identity logic receives a more adequate formulation: life is never exhaustively reducible to thought which remains inevitably instrumental and mediational in character. The analysis does not have to shipwreck in preposterous exaggerations such as Adorno's global indictment of Western civilization as pseudo-Enlightenment which inevitably reverses to myth and is therefore susceptible to the worst forms of barbarism. Rather, Western civilization

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as a project can be self-corrective — at least to the extent that we, as its products and subjects, are willing and able to do so in terms of those very values that have animated it throughout its history.

Somewhat more optimistic than Adorno, Marcuse confronted the same problems with roughly equivalent results. Much more tolerant of his never explicitly repudiated mentor, Heidegger, Marcuse's relation to phenomenology was always more balanced. Yet he also could not conceive of a nomological interpretation of essences and, notwithstanding the fact that he came to grant Husserl's thought considerably more critical power (e.g., in his 1965 essay on the subject), he ultimately rejected the whole apparatus as unredeemably idealistic and positivistic. The problem, however, was with Marcuse's own abstract objectivism, which required some ontological fiction he could accept as a *materialistic* foundation for a philosophical edifice which, at any rate, had already been built for a long time. Thus, after working his way out of Heideggerianism through a partial rearticulation of Hegel in *Reason and Revolution* (partial since neither Marcuse nor any other contemporary critical thinker could ultimately accept Hegel's inevitably conservative conclusions — with the possible exception of Bloch, who refused to separate method and system and could afford to do so only thanks to his peculiar theological perspective foreign to most of his colleagues), he substituted for a phenomenology grounded on universal human operations (defining subjectivity) a crude naturalistic foundation of mythological Freudianism and subsequently an even cruder biologism. Reduced to locating human liberation, first in polymorphous perversion and then in the genes, and still unwilling to give up the collectivist dream (in *Soviet Marxism* the Soviet system was still seen as tendentially progressive), Marcuse's philosophy ended up glorifying as the radical redeeming alternative those outsiders desperately trying to join precisely that system they were alleged to threaten. The opportunistic integration of a privileged black middle class (even at the cost of creating a vast underclass of less fortunate ghetto dwellers unable to capitalize on the highly selective new opportunities created by a clumsy manipulative Federal bureaucracy) and the cynical yuppification of the "revolutionary" drug-using hippies, or the catastrophic involution of Third World revolutions in Cambodia, Uganda, Iran and, to a lesser extent Cuba, have provided the most brutal refutation to Marcuse's emancipatory deductions.

Roughly the same fate befell Adorno's equally arbitrary philosophical edifice. Instead of Marcuse's run-of-the-mill outsiders, Adorno banked on more sophisticated artists and philosophers. Yet the results have been identical. The commodification of art and the enthusiasm with which non-conformist artists have re-joined the establishment (or created alternative ones) provide immediate refutation to any claim to locate emancipatory possibilities in contemporary art-works. The total irrelevance of today's academic philosophy makes any additional comments concerning Adorno's hopes in this area unnecessary. The culmination of his philosophy in an embarassing mimesis with nature,

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achieved through a negative dialectic which can do little more than cleverly spin its conceptual wheels while indicting everything and everyone but a few conceited elitist drop-outs posing as artists and philosophers, need not be the necessary outcome of the rich tradition of German idealism and Hegelian Marxism. A *phenomenological* dialectic sought to universalize the prerogatives that Adorno was willing to grant only to true artists as part and parcel of what it is to be *human*, and to uncover under what *exceptional* social conditions that alienation which produces today's predominant subhumanity is automatically created and recreated. (Along with everyone on the New Left, we also assumed rationality and autonomous individuality to be the hitherto counterfactual rule rather the exception, thus focusing our attention on which exceptional social relations precipitated the abnormal conditions of alienation and reification). Within such a framework, the Marxian analysis of capitalism as inexorably dehumanizing for both the passive exploiter and the disempowered exploited, Adorno's interpretation of identity logic as the conceptual otherness of unequal exchange, Heidegger's critique of technology as the systematic occlusion of Being, the existentialist account of seriality and mundanity as inevitable structures of social reality, etc. may have all been reintegrated within a theory committed to a revitalized project of realizing that Western teleology of which they are all reified and incomplete moments. Because of unexpected political changes, however, this kind of analysis was never pursued beyond mere programmatic outlines.

New Left Disintegration of the Academic Re-Legitimation of Critical Theory

A funny thing happened to the project of developing a phenomenologically-grounded Critical Theory on the way to social praxis: that New Left of which it was supposed to be the philosophical conscience managed to self-destruct. As a political orphan, *Telos* had to rethink its identity and revise its project. First, it was necessary to provide an analysis of the New Left beyond the naive way it understood itself, i.e., as a sudden surge of emancipatory impulses triggered by either lingering or (imagined) intensified domination. Second, it was time to figure out what position to take with respect to Marxism and the various political movements identified with it. Third, if it was to survive in any viable fashion, Critical Theory had to be updated and reconceptualized beyond the aporias of the founding fathers. Fourth, it was imperative to re-evaluate capitalism, imperialism and socialism in light of post-WWII developments. Fifth, we had to make sense of ourselves as historical agents while entertaining no Leninist illusions or falling into similar traps.

The quick disintegration of the New Left after it came in contact with Marxism-Leninism and at the first signs of the winding up of the Vietnam War suggested that it may have been something rather different than we had assumed. Far from representing the death-knell of the late-capitalist system, the New Left came to appear more and more as an expression of its health and vigor. Instead of being its executioner, it seemed more and more its doctor.

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Had not the New Left begun practically with the formation of SDS and the Berkeley Free Speech Movement? And were not those demands essentially efforts to make the system either abide by its own tenets or further extend its logic? The critique of domination that developed during the 1960s focused primarily on bureaucratic and technocratic elitism, and the remedy usually suggested was participation and democratization — solutions as American as baseball, motherhood and apple pie. At any rate, the whole student movement had been made possible precisely by that government-sponsored explosion in higher education connected with the alleged realization that there was a crisis in military preparedness following the Soviet launching of Sputnik (but eventually instrumentalized to reconstitute the American labor force along more technologically and administratively sophisticated lines to facilitate the shift from an industrial society increasingly challenged from all sides by fully rebuilt and highly competitive Western Europe and East Asia to an informational society where the US could maintain world hegemony through a new international division of labor).

More generally, most of the upheavels of the 1960s came to appear increasingly as traditional American politics merely updated and spectacularized for the new conditions of an advanced and highly bureaucratized industrial society. The resurgence of internal opposition seemed exceptional only from the limited historical perspective of the post-WWII period, during which the anti-communist hysteria had resulted in a political conformism actually antithetical to the conflictual framework of checks and balances of the US system of government. Given the massive expansion of the bureaucratic apparatus precipitated by the New Deal, however, along with everything else the opposition also needed, if not fine-tuning from above, at least some direct and indirect subsidy to guarantee that developments would fit with the predominant logic of social engineering. This explains, among other things, why the US government seemed not at all reluctant to sponsor organizations and programs whose objectives were clearly to subvert existing power relations. One need only think of Saul Alinsky, of OES, and all the thoughtlessly "squandered" funding for (at best) marginal social programs to encourage community reorganization to wonder to what extent the "spontaneous" opposition that exploded in the 1960s was really unexpected in Washington. From this perspective, the operation was relatively successful. The most positive contributions of the New Left in precipitating the end of the Vietnam War, speeding the elimination of lingering racial segregation and rationalizing gender relations to conform to post-industrial production and reproduction requirements were essential to save US society from having to confront massive socio-economic dislocations.

In retrospect, it is fairly clear that the anti-communism and imperialism which resulted in the US decision to prevent "world communism" from making any further inroads in the Third World, while at the same time maintaining open markets for expansive American industrial products and easy access to cheap raw materials, were obsolete — out of touch with new political

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realities and economically counterproductive to US interests. Already in the 1950s, after the death of Stalin, it was evident that the Soviet Union had entered a phase of potentially terminal involution resulting in the Sino-Soviet split, the realization — with the rise of Brezhnev — of the impossibility or extreme difficulty in reforming the system, and eventually in almost giving up any pretense of managing effectively an imperialist communist network. All this, however, had remained well outside the tunnel vision of a State Department and a US Department of Defense which, still recovering from McCarthy's charges of being infested with communist infiltrators, had effectively eliminated almost all conflict within its ranks. It was to the New Left's credit that it helped reopen a debate on these matters and thus contributed to the rationalization of US foreign policy and the development, in the 1970s, of Kissinger's and Brzezinski's "financial" imperialism which turned out to be immensely more efficient and less costly than the earlier, cruder military variety.

The New Left involvement with the Civil Rights movement also resulted in similar rationalizing consequences. As Adolph L. Reed Jr. showed in a seminal *Telos* article, a collusion of interests between Northeastern capitalism and the Civil Rights movement came about as a result of the desire to rationalize Southern particularism and make that region, which had hitherto retained a modicum of cultural autonomy, also susceptible to capitalist penetration. Thus the Civil Rights movement, following the landmark 1954 decision of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*, which signaled a major shift in Federal policy towards race relations, succeeded to a great extent thanks to Federal support and Northern foundations' funding (especially from the Ford Foundation). The abolition of racial segregation meant also the elimination of the "Southern way of life" and integration into the mainstream of American life. That, as Reed shows, also precipitated, as an unintended consequence, the destruction of the traditional black elite which for years effectively represented and mediated black interests with the White power structure. This left even the black communities in Northern urban centers isolated and no longer able to represent their needs, which resulted in the urban ghetto riots in the mid-1960s. The subsequent Federal intervention advocated by the New Left did succeed in precipitating the creation of a new mediational structure in the form of an affirmative action black bureaucratic apparatus which split most of the black community into a vast underclass haphazardly managed and regulated by a new middle class black elite eventually culminating in the Jackson phenomenon — the black variant of the 1980s problem of the New Class. But by the early 1970s the New Left had disappeared from the political scene and consequently had no impact in articulating the problems of the new underclass which, left to the mercy of New Class moralizing management, smolders in its misery as the putative *fons et origo malorum* in contemporary American society from drugs to AIDS to the decline in international competitiveness and urban disintegration.

The problem of gender relations follows a similar trajectory: the ultimate

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impact of the New Left in this area was to help rationalize what had developed into an increasingly untenable situation. By the 1960's the American family had effectively ceased to exist as a productive unit. This left most women stuck in traditional roles that had become increasingly obsolete in a consumer society which had industrialized most of its earlier functions while greatly expanding "essential" needs through the culture industry — needs satisfiable only through an expanded discretionary income generally attainable by taking a job. Women did join men in the labor market, performing roughly similar tasks without, however, either being remunerated equally or taking on new social roles free of any lingering subservience to men. Almost by default, this contradictory predicament was initially replicated within New Left organizations where, in the midst of demanding universal liberation, democracy, and equality, women naturally came to reflect on their own condition. As with the Civil Rights Movement, the initial call was for full integration (the now forgotten Women's Liberation Movement, affectionately referred to, for a brief period, as Women Lib). This, however, meant that women were to become like men and thus obliterate that *petit différence* constituting female specificity. In the wake of this projected homogenization, feminism came into being to vindicate women's particularity and to transform what was previously a man's public environment into a gender-neutral one. But the politics of feminism did not stop there. With the disappearance of the New Left, feminism became the functional equivalent of that black nationalist ideology which succeeded the mere call for integration by the Civil Rights Movement, i.e., the ideology of that upwardly mobile elite created by affirmative action and sustained by Federal legislation. Following black politics, feminism also fought and won affirmative action legislation that likewise bifurcated a large number of women into a privileged, upwardly mobile professional elite, and the overwhelming majority of the remaining ones for whom, to the extent that a *cultural* rationalization of traditional roles could not be readily carried out due to the lack of a new family model, feminism entailed all the disadvantages of the loss of traditional female privileges and none of the advantages of feminist gains (e.g., the feminization of poverty as a result of the relaxation of divorce laws).

Given *Telos*' neo-Hegelian origins, this dialectic of universality and particularity whereby abstract universal ideals invariably translate into concrete particularistic advantages for specific groups was neither unprecedented nor unexpected. Although we were still under the spell of that Hegelian unilinear theory of history according to which every new particularization of universality would take place on a higher and broader level, we had hoped that the inevitable reparticularization of the New Left's universal goals — reconstituted Western and American ideals that had succumbed to the unavoidable erosion of mundanity — could have been kept under constant scrutiny and control in a revitalized public sphere aware of the recurring pitfalls of unavoidable one-sidedness and pseudo-universality. If we grudgingly agreed with the Sartre of the *Critique de la Raison Dialectique* that authentic universality could only obtain

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briefly during the phase of group fusion, before the inevitable subsequent relapse into seriality, we also hoped that the permanent subversion of institutional structures by an ever vibrant New Left would save us from this hitherto inescapable fate. (Unlike with Sartre, who unwarrantedly eternalized the predicament of ineliminable seriality as an ontological condition of Being, we relegated it to historical contingency in the pre-history phase of sub-individuality, i.e., something that could have been transcended with the achievement of that generalized individuality resulting from the changed social conditions we meant to help bring about). This is why, even though we were always marginal to it, the demise of the New Left was such a devastating blow to the *Telos* project. It pulled the eschatological rug from under our feet and precipitated a far-reaching re-examination of the very relation of theory and praxis which had been our starting point.

The disappearance of the New Left as a movement left a number of political ruins whose corporatist character fed all too well within the one-dimensional logic of American porkbarrel politics. On the one hand, New Left intellectuals became readily integrated and automatically disempowered within an academic Gulag which, as Jacoby has recently pointed out, disintegrates reason ever more effectively into socially and politically irrelevant self-referential "discourses." On the other hand, women, blacks, gays and other organized activist groups continued to successfully present their particularistic demands clothed in universalistic rhetoric; but precisely because of this, they could no longer function as autonomous control mechanisms to contain the system's rationality crisis represented by continuing bureaucratic involution. Rather, they became additional clients making economistic claims met more or less grudgingly by a drifting government bureaucracy torn between the need to implement the Administration's universalistic policies while simultaneously responding to Congress' particularistic needs during a period characterized by the constitutional crisis precipitated by Watergate. As such, however, they ceased being an organic opposition able to expose and at the same time regulate and rationalize the bureaucracy's pseudo-universality. This political re-onedimensionalization reintroduced roughly the same social and political conditions predominant during the immediate pre-New Left period and resulted in the unprecedented bungling of the Carter Administration. Reagan's subsequent attempt to resurrect Nixon's rationalization policies (successfully checkmated by the Watergate scandal) sought to address the problems of the system's rationality crisis by ubiquitously reintroducing market mechanisms long since terminally eroded by that same advanced capitalism they were meant to rationalize. Their failure poses serious theoretical problems which, however, had already been raised in *Telos* in connection with our efforts to come to terms with the demise of the New Left.

That the New Left itself had to be seen historically, i.e., as a phenomenon with a definite beginning and an inevitable ending, prompted in the early 1970s the deployment of our general theoretical apparatus to analyze it as a

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determinate socio-historical phenomenon — with paradoxical consequences. This led to the development of the theory of artificial negativity and a growing distancing of *Telos* from whatever remained of a Left in the US. It also undermined the Hegelian-Marxist whole-part dialectic in terms of which we had tried to understand ourselves. The original phenomenological Marxism became much more implicitly "phenomenological" in focusing on the objective dynamics of American society and considerably less "Marxist" in its eschatological expectations. Because there was no longer any New Left to function as the potential agency of collective emancipation, this resulted in a subjectless perspective on events which were now analyzed primarily in terms of outcomes and reconstructed with a causal structure which left the impression of, at best, predestination or, at worst, a conspiracy theory. Elaborating Marcuse's one-dimensionality thesis, artificial negativity historicized what the first generation of Critical Theorists saw prematurely as a terminal phase of American capitalism. Artificial negativity analyzed the traditional dynamics of state domination from a post-New Deal perspective which, having successfully solved the problems of pre-Depression *laissez-faire* capitalism, had managed to generate new and much more complicated ones. In this analysis society appeared as so thoroughly penetrated by the state that whatever spontaneous resistance developed it generally took the forms pre-established by bureaucratic control mechanisms. Far from resulting in the fine-tuned society of technocratic dreams, the "totally administered society" generated new contradictions which by their very nature eluded both the bureaucracy's own normal social science as well as traditional leftist analyses. Worse yet, it tended to reverse established political meanings and thus to undercut any radical account prefiguring immediate emancipatory impact.

Couched in Hegelian categories, what the theory of artificial negativity articulated was something relatively straightforward. Since the dialectic moves by recuperating that otherness (negativity) which positivity necessarily excludes in constituting itself as such, the progressive and emancipatory moment is always a function of how this excluded negativity reasserts itself and manages to become reintegrated into a new, albeit still ultimately partial, synthesis. However, if this negativity is successfully excluded or otherwise prevented from expressing itself, then the one-sidedness of positivity is not overcome, resulting in a gradual involution that takes the form of an ever deepening crisis. The solution to this predicament lies in the free expression of this negativity, and simultaneously in the gradual reintegration of it into that one-sided whole that originally excluded it, preventing the kind of qualitative break Marx described as the revolutionary moment. In other words, along with American constitutional theory, the artificial negativity thesis postulated the necessity of maintaining a *conflictual* system of checks and balances to guarantee the internal health of a dynamic advanced capitalist society. It went roughly as follows: 1) since the massive state intervention precipitated by the New Deal had destroyed many of the system's autonomous built-in mechanisms of checks and balances,

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in order to remain viable the state itself had to reconstruct them from above; 2) to the extent that bureaucratically-constructed new mechanisms are not autonomous and generally turn out to be mere extensions of that very bureaucratic apparatus they are meant to oppose, the project was bound to fail to generate the required conflictuality, resulting in a crisis of rationality such as, e.g., the excesses and aberrations of "The Great Society"; 3) only by eliminating all remaining and no longer necessary repressive mechanisms (unnecessary because of the definitive destruction or integration of all internal opposition, e.g., the annihilation of the Communist Party and the successful implementation of most of the socialist program in the New Deal) could have allowed a new internal opposition to flourish. This new opposition would have been able to express that all-important excluded negativity the reintegration of which would have facilitated the fine-tuning of the highly inefficient, increasingly irrational and wasteful system of bureaucratic onedimensionality; 4) but even that is inadequate, since the massive state intervention of the previous 30 years had even managed to "rationalize" the minimal autonomous individuality and citizenship required to generate an internal opposition — the "narcissistic personality," what Siegel calls "dependent individualism" or the "organization man" produced by the culture industry's all-too-successful process of social homogenization, could neither generate nor sustain the required oppositional structures; 5) thus, in order to guarantee its continued viability, the state itself is forced to reconstitute that very individuality the Left had historically seen as destroyed by the system and whose recreation and extension has been one of the Left's major goals (the "new" socialist, communist or simply "free" man); 6) paradoxically enough, in the absence of a viable Left opposition, this forces the system to internalize the Left's objectives and thus renders obsolete traditional political categories: it no longer makes sense to talk about Left and Right politics, since their objectives have now converged; 7) fundamental internal divisions do, however, remain, but no longer primarily between capitalists and proletarians, whites and blacks, women and men, etc., but between the managerial bureaucracy whose pseudo-universalistic goals of socio-economic rationalization particularize into a defense of New Class privileges, and a managed populus which the bureaucratic apparatus cannot ultimately allow to become autonomous since that would undermine the basis of the managerial bureaucracy's self-justification and privilege.

These conclusions, gradually reached over a number of years, in addition to further alienating *Telos* from much of the traditional Left, threatened that very marginality the journal had always prized as a *conditio sine qua non* for critical reflection and original thinking. Ironically, *Telos* found itself not really that much outside the mainstream it had always spurned — but at a time in which mainstream thinking had either ceased functioning effectively or, victim of that same bureaucratic involution it was unable and unwilling to confront, had degenerated to mere *techné*. Already in the early 1970s, the task seemed to be the constitution of an updated, preferably American-grounded, version of

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Critical Theory which, having historicized its earlier formulations and acknowledged their limitations, would concretely tackle post-New Deal realities. That is when *Telos* entered its pluralistic phase (or its "holding pattern," as it was originally called) in order not only to reconstitute a viable theoretical perspective, but also to wait for an eventual clearing of the then murky political waters. It took some time before we finally accepted that the New Left was a closed political chapter with no happy ending and that the relation of our theory to any political practice was at least as problematic as it had been for the first generation of Critical Theorists. Not only were the infamous "hundred flowers" encouraged to bloom in our midst, even at the risk of tolerating what turned out to be far too many weeds, we never allowed sharp philosophical conflicts to develop into anything more than mere differences of opinion resolvable through internal negotiations among the various editors. During this period a good number of new people joined the journal's editorial board who had very diverse backgrounds and held theoretical and philosophical positions very different from those of the original editorial group.

Within such a pluralistic context it is not surprising that the German "heirs" of Critical Theory — Habermas and his growing number of epigones in the US and abroad — became central both in terms of contributions and focus even though, from the very beginning, it was clear that their outlook was very different from ours. Whereas *Telos* was born of the need to provide an alternative to British linguistic philosophy (and any kind of academic approach privileging language or abstract categories over life and that totality which can only partially be captured in thought at any time), the "new and improved" Critical Theory distinguished itself from the Founding Fathers by rejecting the dialectic and any theory of reification now subsumed and discarded as part and parcel of obsolete "philosophies of consciousness," replacing it with the likes of communication theory, functionalism and neo-positivism. While we had gone out of our way to demonstrate the *historicity* and cultural specificity of science as a particular Western project (hence our enthusiasm for thinkers as different as Husserl and Feyerabend), the Habermasians bought lock, stock and barrel the positivistic position of a univocal, cumulative natural science providing an objective self-corrective depiction of the structure of being. Where we had assumed that the Hegelian critique had once and for all relegated Kant to a place roughly similar to that of Aquinas or Marcus Aurelius in history of philosophy textbooks, "communication theory" resurrected him to provide a new philosophical foundation for what turned out to be a surprisingly weak new version of liberal ideology. While some of us had begun our intellectual careers by showing functionalism's inability to deal effectively with history and qualitative change, Habermas swallowed its Parsonian variant whole. Adorno's and Horkheimer's obviously exaggerated but not altogether incorrect indictment of the Enlightenment as culminating in the horrors of the 20th century — Auschwitz, the Gulag and Hiroshima — was phased out of critical discussion in favor of a flat progressivism promising a panglossian

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future of growing rationalization, democratization and well being. Given these positions and other similar ones, it is understandable how this brand of Critical Theory, along with historically obsolete earlier versions (which, precisely because of their obsolescence, became prime candidates for academic mummification) could readily degenerate to the level of another subdiscipline within the same sterile academic context *Telos* had sought to revitalize and render historically relevant.

Unlike the artificial negativity analysis, which postulated the system's inherent inability to generate any organic negativity which could subsequently be instrumentalized in the form of internal regulatory mechanisms (hence its "artificial" and ultimately counterproductive character) the theory of communicative action could only project increasing democratization and rationalization as a result of scientific and technological progress. This recycled 19th century liberal optimism, which self-consciously generalized the structure of academic seminars to society at large, was not very helpful in providing much in the way of insight into contemporary social and political realities which, if anything, are increasingly characterized by growing irrationality. It did, however, reintegrate within a Critical Theory shell emptied of its Hegelian and Marxist contents much of that normal social science the members of the first generation of the Frankfurt School had generally rejected as outright ideology. Thus it turned out to be particularly suitable for ex-New Left radicals seeking professorial integration without at the same time having to explicitly repudiate their political past. By practicing Habermasian communicative action as Critical Theory, they could claim a continuity between their earlier youthful aspirations and their more concrete career objectives. This helps explain the otherwise inexplicable success of a second-rate philosophy pretending to be sociology among many 1968-vintage academics and within an American social science establishment where mathematical mystification as well as what C. Wright Mills called "grand theorizing" have historically been the normally accepted routes of self-legitimation by otherwise vacuous academic claims.

The End of Internal Pluralism

Notwithstanding such fundamental differences, there were no major internal clashes during the so-called "pluralistic phase." This was probably due to the fact that *Telos*' relation to politics remained always very intense but also relatively distant. The rarified air of global theories is not generally conducive to devisive splits. Throughout this period, however, there were constant calls to examine concrete political issues and confront what were clear internal differences. Initially we took the easy way out and focused primarily on Eastern Europe, where we had not only a solid internal consensus of solidarity with opposition forces in those countries, but also a highly qualified staff to deal with issues such as the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Hungarian reforms, Yugoslav regionalism, Solidarity in Poland, USSR nationalities, even Albanian literature.

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When we tackled West European politics, differences did surface concerning how to evaluate, e.g., the prospects for socialism in France, or the emancipatory thrust of the West German peace movement, but they never translated into any factionalism, mainly because there were never consistent lines of divisions which carried over from one set of issues to the next. The fundamental philosophical devide between the old *Telos* group and the Habermasians turned out to be essentially irrelevant in terms of political positions. On the one hand, the old *Telos* group's critique of advanced capitalism could, at best, only provide a reconstruction of the logic of the system having no clear normative import (given the lack of any identifiable agency able to intervene or sustain any meaningful politics). Consequently, the only political concretization it was able to reach was always along the same general content-less universalistic lines followed by the Habermasians. On the other hand, communication theory could not unambiguously indicate any clear direction other than reiterating empty formalisms concerning freedom of speech, respect for others, and similar transubstantiated Christian homilies hardly anyone could possibly disagree with (or, worse yet, it focused its analytical energies on one type of social crisis — the legitimation crisis — which definitely did not exist in an otherwise crisis-infested system). As a result, whenever specific disagreements surfaced, they were normally discussed on grounds having nothing to do with fundamental philosophical positions.

A major split did eventually develop over what came to be known as "the redemption debate" which, however, only involved a part of the editorial board and, at any rate, did not have any clear-cut resolution. It was precipitated by an explicit call to abandon any lingering grandiose plans to change the world made off-handedly by relatively recent East European additions to the staff — a call that was surprisingly taken up by a number of other editors. What was peculiar about this debate was that, by and large no one on the editorial board had even hinted at the need to develop such plans for years and, if anything, the whole staff could have been charged with "hyper-realism" when it came to concrete matters. It ultimately reflected an extraneous by-product of *Telos*' perhaps excessive concern with Eastern Europe and the fact that we had probably taken too seriously ideas developed in a context quite irrelevant to our intellectual and political realities.

Never for a moment, during our extensive elaboration of East European problems and the possibility of reforming either those regimes or "really existing" Marxism, did we consider anything of the kind as possible models for the West in general or the US in particular. Our interest was based on solidarity with the oppressed, the need to provide a platform to voices which otherwise had none, and general concern with possible new elaborations of Marxist theory. After all, we had learned a great deal from thinkers such as Lukács and Kosik, or from the highly informed analyses other East European intellectuals had been able to provide. Yet, on the theoretical level, our East European colleagues were not addressing the kind of problems we confronted. Their struggle with

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their own peculiarly crude variety of home-spun Diamat had effectively destroyed any residual interest they may have had in anything dealing with the dialectic which, for very good personal reasons, they had come to associate with chicanery and outright fraud. To compensate, they had come to a naive view of "science" as not just neutral but also objective and unambiguously emancipatory. Furthermore, their understandable concern for democracy and formal freedoms was relatively irrelevant to us. We had begun precisely by assuming their givenness and criticizing the way these Western institutions tended to conceal new modes of unfreedom and to block the possibility of democratic participation. The bottom line was that, except for their excellent first-hand reports of conditions in Eastern Europe, these obviously honest and well-meaning intellectuals had absolutely nothing to contribute to our project on a theoretical level — and when they tried the results were generally disruptive and counterproductive.

The redemption debate was precipitated precisely by such an unfortunate confusion of one-sided East European readings of American radicalism with *Telos*' traditional concerns. It transposed theological categories presumably extrapolated from Benjamin's more obscure writings into a political context where eschatological options such as "redemption" could not have been more inappropriate. This seemingly futile beating of a "dead horse" generated so much commotion because it implied a refusal of any utopian dimension, the acceptance of the given as the only meaningful political horizon, and a general resignation anathema even to people who had totally rejected the excessive expectations of 1968. It reflected essentially the resigned outlook of East European intellectuals who, having successfully relocated in the US and experienced for the first time freedoms and options they had been long denied in their native countries, confused their new situation with the equivalent of heaven and damned all utopian impulses as religious ravings by misguided radicals. This attack on the redemptive windmills ran into considerable internal opposition, even when recycled in the seemingly neutral call for *Mündigkeit*. Eventually it grew into a broader issue, which had an impact on the journal's general direction. It resulted in an intensified internal call to stop dealing with Eastern Europe and other marginally relevant subjects and to confront substantive American issues. Within such a context, theological categories such as "redemption" would automatically fall by the wayside.

The redemption debate was, however, only the tip of an ideological iceberg concerning deeper misgivings about radicalism in general — especially by the Habermasians who by and large achieved a tenured *Mündigkeit* and, unable to comprehend the new, chose to retreat to a timid rear-gard action defending traditional "bourgeois ideals" they saw increasingly threatened by any criticism whatsoever. This conservative turn reflected a similar process within American society in general. Throughout the 1970s the US gradually moved to the Right in a fashion that had not altogether escaped the artificial negativity analysis. After all, the early functionalist interpretation of the tendential

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instrumentalization of oppositional movements, of the manipulation of crises as effective steering mechanisms in a political context paralyzed into executive inaction by the normal unfolding of the logic of parliamentarianism, and of new strategies to re-establish US world hegemony on new power bases (no longer in military or political terms, but more along cultural and financial lines) were vindicated, first, by the Kissinger-Brzezinski foreign policy of petro-dollar recycling into the Third World and Eastern Europe to establish new and more permanent relations of dependence, and subsequently by Reagan's obsession with the deployment of mythical market mechanisms to regulate all imaginable social disfunctions. But in unfolding its preliminary analysis, artificial negativity did not heed sufficiently its own major premise of an intensification of irrationality as a result of the decline of that minimal autonomous individuality presupposed by any rational approach. Thus, *rationalistic* projections of the logic of growing irrationality turned out to be much too optimistic.

The growth of "dependent individualism" at home, and the collapse of any meaningful development strategy in underdeveloped societies undermined both the objectives of the "conservative revolution" as well as the attempt to integrate, in a subordinate role, would-be healthy developing countries in Latin America and Eastern Europe. Efforts to dismantle the welfare state predicated on an autonomous social structures able to perform functions previously relegated to government bureaucracies failed not only on purely practical grounds, but also because that dependent individualism that had seen fit to elect a conservative Republican executive sought to protect its particularistic interests by simultaneously choosing predominantly liberal democrats as its congressional representatives. The resulting stalemate between the executive and the legislature meant that no major changes could take place and, notwithstanding Right and Left rhetoric about desirable or disastrous initiatives, all that happened in the 1980s was essentially the simple extension of the *status quo*. The financial strategy of close but dependant economic integration of Latin America and Eastern Europe was more successful, but at the cost of permanently tying up massive amounts of capital in loans which will probably never be repaid. Thus the conditions which would have made possible a post-New Deal administrative strategy based on the manipulation of whatever negativity either developed spontaneously or with bureaucratic help never materialized in a context of political drifting. Because of largely fortuitous events, such as the low price of petroleum throughout the 1980s and successful monetary policies, it has been possible, at least for the time being, to postpone the development of a desperately needed new social model.

During this period *Telos* also drifted from St.Louis to New York and became probably the first journal ever to literally have its new headquarters physically built by its editors in the heart of Manhattan. Since construction and theoretical disputes do not mix well, there were no breaks within the editorial board until well after the New York move was completed. Reminiscent of a

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similar sequence of events within *Iskra* when Lenin's Bolsheviks and Plekhanov's Mensheviks parted ways on the basis of "irreconcilable differences" concerning proof-reading or such-like momentous questions of office management, the Habermasians eventually left the editorial board in 1987 because of earth-shaking issues of this type. It was not on the basis of profound differences concerning any real or alleged distorted communication, but because of more pedestrian problems having to do with lack of readily available baby-sitters and the consequent inability to attend editorial meetings. That put an end to the phase of internal pluralism also because, by that time, it had become clear that political realities were not likely to improve drastically in the immediate future and it was time to settle the issue of our theoretical identity.

The Rediscovery of America

Although the need to move away from Europe and begin to confront concrete American problems were articulated within the editorial board as early as the middle 1970s when there had been an ill-fated attempt to produce a special issue on the US on the occasion of the bicentennial (indicative of our general predicament, it was to be planned and carried out by the *Toronto* Telos group!), the task proved to be more difficult than initially suspected. As with the first generation of Critical Theorists, who resisted speaking and writing in English long after they were chased out of Germany by Nazism, our own brand of Critical Theory also refused to Americanize. The call for a re-examination of the role of the culture industry from an agency of homogenization and standardization to one seeking desperately to reconstitute a long-gone heterogeneity went unanswered. The same fate fell on attempts to re-evaluate the alleged emancipatory function of art in the US, or the logic of homogenization and commodification elsewhere in the world, where that particularity and specificity so highly prized in advanced industrial societies has cost innumerable numbers of lives.

An old Chinese (or maybe Armenian?) proverb says that it is easier for a wolf to shed his coat than to change his habits — or something to that effect. Yet there is such a thing as adaptation and change over time. While the *Telos* wolves do not seem to be much of an exception to the rule, analyses of specifically American themes from perspectives rooted neither in the old Critical Theory, nor in the Theory of Communicative Action, nor, for that matter, in standard objectivistic social science are increasingly finding their way in the pages of *Telos*. That lack of institutional affiliation which has guaranteed so far our critical perspective has also been an obstacle in terms of recruiting new contributors or a broader readership. Pending unlikely qualitative changes in the American intellectual scene, however, this predicament is likely to continue — and so will *Telos* . . .

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The Hidden Telos

Robert D'Amico

A retrospective concerning any journal is problematic. Some of the issues that motivated the formation of the journal, its continuation and its editorial decisions are often not directly reflected in the published articles or in the collective interpretation of its readers. Also, editorial boards change, are rarely if ever homogeneous, and one person's viewpoint on a debate hardly conveys its full interest or complexity. The following reflections are thus qualified, and that is one sense of the "hidden" *Telos* I cite in the title. The further qualification is that I want to speak of some theoretical concerns which, for a variety of reasons, were never fully represented in the journal but motivated its founding and direction. These theoretical concerns were, on the whole, less public than the discussion of Marxism and Critical Theory which formed the journal's reputation. But I believe they determined, at the deepest level, many of its subsequent positions and controversies.

Let me begin at the beginning. Why would philosophy students studying phenomenology found a journal like *Telos*? The introduction of Husserlian phenomenology came at a special moment in American intellectual life — at a time when, in countries like France, a never fully digested phenomenology was being displaced by a structuralism which, at least in Buffalo, had already been examined and rejected. In the post-WWII period American intellectuals found themselves searching for a way to discuss the role of science, technology, and values in culture. These concerns had begun at least by the late 19th century when the US began to define itself as a distinct culture and to struggle with its religious parochialism. By the mid-20th century this struggle became an effort to transform universities into scientific research institutions. This debate has hardly ended, in view of recent efforts by Allan Bloom or E.D. Hirsch to defend humanism against both a critical and technical theory of education, and the regular reemergence within American culture of religious fundamentalism and its attacks on liberalism and humanism.

However, in the immediate post-war context, two philosophical tendencies competed for dominance. On the one side was logical positivism, which, with pragmatism and phenomenology, was one of the three major philosophical

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movements of the 20th century. This form of positivism held that scientific inquiry would resolve traditional problems of knowledge. It also relegated ethics, along with traditional metaphysics, to the ignominy of pseudo-statements through its controversial theory of meaning. On the other side was existentialism, whose influence spread beyond philosophy into popular culture. Existentialism was perhaps the first of a series of popularized "philosophies of life," whose stance against the alienation of science and technology, advocacy of therapy, and pseudo-religious jargon attracted an affluent but anxious middle class, tired of orthodox religion.

Though it is obvious that the debates with both positivism in the social sciences and existentialism in cultural criticism were an important orientation for *Telos*, this context is normally poorly understood. What needs to be clarified is how these debates impinged on Marxism and Critical Theory and why, for example, *Telos* was choosing to discuss, in its early issues, such unique and unusual thinkers as Enzo Paci, Tran Duc Thao, Vasco Ronchi, and Paul K. Feyerabend.

To understand the problem I will briefly discuss "realism" in the philosophy of science, which I believe formed the central theoretical issue motivating the reevalutation of the Critical Theory tradition in *Telos*. The main movements of 20th century philosophy are opposed to realism. By that I mean that pragmatism, positivism, phenomenology or hermeneutics all argue against the idea that theories are to be judged on the basis of their correspondence to an independently existing reality. These approaches substitute for a realist standard of correspondence such modest criteria as empirical corroboration, instrumental success, or mutual understanding. In the early period of intellectual change I am discussing, positivism battled against the realist assumptions of American naturalism. In the work of Ralph Barton Perry or Alfred North Whitehead, the naturalist tradition had defended the natural sciences and biology against religion. Positivism transformed the defense of science into a case for empiricism and the need to exclude metaphysics from both science and philosophy as the ultimate weapon against theism. Naturalism, in a losing battle, tried to show that the sciences progress by discovering how the world really is, not merely how it appears to our senses.

For purposes of this discussion of *Telos*, what is interesting is that orthodox Marxism was also a realist theory. Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, which for decades was, along with Engelsian materialism, the source for Marxist philosophy of science, is a litany of anti-empiricist, anti-positivist arguments. Lenin replaced traditional philosophical questions with a defense of common sense, representational realism. For Lenin a theory, such as Marxism, is true to the extent that it accurately represents an independent, causal order in reality. But the kind of defense one finds in Lenin shows many of the weaknesses of traditional realism, and why alternative views appeared attractive. It is fundamentally a dogmatic position, because a current scientific ontology is simply taken as fixed and permanent. Realism lacks an historical

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account of the emergence and growth of knowledge, and it thereby identifies theoretical strategies with reality. *Telos* wanted to intervene in the context of this debate in the social sciences by rejecting the realism implicit in both naturalism and Marxist materialism, while still accepting their arguments against empiricism and pragmatism. *Telos* specifically accepted the historicist arguments of Hegelian Marxism that the realms of appearance and instrumentality were cultural expressions. In general, *Telos* came to the defense of philosophical reflection against scientism; whether that scientism was in the name of positivism, Leninism or naturalism. As for the issues that concerned the journal, existentialism and positivism, were more in agreement than disagreement. The famous last few pages of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* on the radical distinction between values and reality, and thus the impossibility of an ethics, virtually echo A.J. Ayer's equally famous account of emotivism in *Language, Truth, and Logic*. Also, attacks on philosophical reflection united positivism, materialism and existentialism in dismissing a philosophy of the social sciences and thereby reinforcing the application of technical solutions to social problems.

The alternative *Telos* explored was phenomenology, specifically the work of the late Husserl on the history and philosophy of science. Husserl's work explored a transcendental account of subjectivity in the formation of knowledge. Kant had argued that to be an "empirical realist," i.e., a realist about the existence of the common-sense everyday world, one must accept the position he called "transcendental idealism." What Kant meant was that, at the transcendental or reflective level concepts and forms of experience are understood *not* as representations of the world but impositions of mind. What this means for Kant is that realism about the everyday world of experience is only about the way the world appears phenomenally, not the way it is defintively and in itself. In fact, Kant concludes it is impossible to demonstrate that our concepts refer to a transcendental reality, since that requires applying concepts beyond the limits of experience, purely through reason, and leads to insoluble antinomies.

Positivism also took over this basic Kantian strategy, but unlike phenomenology, it sought to exclude all philosophical problems as unanswerable. The verification theory of meaning then also excluded Kant's transcendental arguments. The difficulty for positivism, as is well known, was that the verification principle was self-destructive. The principle itself turned out to be a meaningless claim, not capable of being verified (or trivially true by definition) and, when modified to avoid circularity, no longer provided a way to distinguish scientific from non-scientific claims. The question for philosophy was then either to revive realism or provide some alternative to empiricism. Precisely as a result of these dilemmas, philosophies of science began to explore oppositions to positivism either by defending realism (e.g., Hilary Putnam, who at the time was also defending Marxism, and Grover Maxwell), turning toward historicism (Thomas Kuhn, James Conant, and Paul K. Feyerabend), or using Husserl (Michael Polanyi, Enzo Paci, Marvin Farber).

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In the late 19th century, American philosophy had produced an indigenous movement, pragmatism, which suddenly appeared viable and was also revived in these struggles with positivism. Pragmatism developed an account in which philosophical problems were resolved by being interpreted as modes of action. But for those influenced by Marxist historicism, the pragmatic appeal to "use," without further critical reflection on what was meant by "action," failed as a neutral and universal standard. It functioned, on the contrary, as a legitimating cultural expression. Accepting the judgment of technical success sacrificed philosophy's role of criticizing experience, including forms of practice. Further, as philosophy became a specialized and professional university discipline, under the tutelage of positivism and its sub-programs of language analysis and logic, these traditional responsibilities of philosophy were either instrumentalized or were migrating to popular intellectual fashions such as existentialism, behaviorism, or mysticism. This tendency toward cultural separation culminated in the spread of "metaphysical" and therapeutic movements, such as scientology, arising directly within popular culture, and thus outside of universities. In this context, phenomenology seemed the only self-critical alternative.

Putting aside this effort at reconstructing a cultural context, what was the contribution of Husserl to the theoretical analysis of scientism and technocratic rationality? Science is able to progress technically and in terms of human utility, Husserl holds in "The Origin of Geometry," precisely to the extent that it represses the self-reflection inherent in rationality. Husserl calls this repression of the subjectivity within knowledge "objectivism," and gives a detailed analysis of its history and function in *The Crisis of the European Sciences*. One obvious form of "objectivism" is Cartesian realism. But Husserl also uses the term to refer to the reification of technical or instrumental success in science, as when he discusses the Galilean strategy of identifying success in mathematical formalism with natural reality. Thus his term "objectivism" applies to both realism and the identification of technique with reality. He argues that a systematic investigation of how knowledge is constituted subjectively is the only way to prevent this hasty identification of concepts and objects.

Husserl's phenomenology begins thus with a critique of knowledge based on the representation of what is immediately given in experience. His position would prove decisive in the rebirth of a post-empiricist and post-positivist philosophy of science because it collapsed a hard distinction between observation and theory. The positivist program required that observation statements were clearly distinct from theoretical or explanatory expressions in science. Observation statements, understood as "reports" on sense data or appearances, are supposed to substitute for theoretical formulations by translation rules. The theoretical terms are simply short-hand expressions for long lists of observations. Philosophical analysis, the positivist holds, safeguards against the metaphysical interpretation of theoretical concepts, here in

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agreement with Husserl, or the tendency to identify a concept with an entity. But the way to rectify this tendency is to carry out reductions of theoretical language to observations. The positivist acts as the "semiotics police," protecting empiricism from realist reification.

What Husserl questioned in positivism was not the threat of realism but the dogma of neutral observations. Husserl showed how any appeal to experience involves systematic "pre-judgments." What was required was a study of experience as interpretation, in which sense data or appeals to the self-evidence of that which appears as "transparent" are the results, not the origins, of systems of knowledge. The illusion of "immediacy," Husserl argues, is the result of "the sedimentation of past meanings." Therefore, in his account of geometry, he shows how the illusion of self-evidence comes ultimately to block reflection on how the concepts of this science were formed out of preconceptual experience. For phenomenology, as opposed to empiricism, there are no unproblematic claims in the form of protocol statements about appearances.

Having been deprived of the "myth of the given," and realizing that the phenomenal realm of evidence is constructed by a transcendental subjectivity, Husserl appears to leave epistemology with neither methodological nor automatic recipes for knowledge. He thus abandoned the aims of traditional philosophy of science. To go further with his complex work on the sciences would take me too far afield, but I wanted to briefly provide a context for discussing two uses of Husserl that influenced *Telos*.

Marvin Farber, in *Naturalism and Subjectivism*, constructed an account of Husserl as an anti-positivist and anti-existentialist thinker; but the ultimate aim of his rereading of Husserl was toward reviving what Farber called "a critical naturalism or realism." Farber called his account of realism "critical" because he wanted to include a "social and historical analysis of experience" in the constitution of knowledge. He attempted, in effect, to graft Marxist realism to phenomenology.

It is of some historical interest that, without being aware of each others' work (as far as I know), Horkheimer made the same arguments as Farber in *Eclipse of Reason*, published in 1947 in an effort to have an impact on his host country. Like Farber, Horkheimer grouped under the term "subjective reason" positivism, existentialism, and pragmatism. The issue was, as with Husserl's analysis of geometry, that subjectivity was both repressed and yet identified with practical utility. "Having given up autonomy, reason has become an instrument. In the formalistic aspect of subjective reason, stressed by positivism, its unrelatedness to objective content is emphasized; in its instrumental aspect, stressed by pragmatism, its surrender to heteronomous contents is emphasized. Reason has become completely harnessed to the social process. . . . Concepts have become 'streamlined,' rationalized, labor-saving devices."

But both Farber and Horkheimer, in concern over what they saw as rela-

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tivism in multiple interpretations of the natural world with no philosophical criteria of truth, tried to modify Husserl's defense of transcendental subjectivism through some version of realism or reference. Farber concluded that the proliferation of interpretations of experience was proof of realism. "The varied interpretation of the world itself requires an explanation. In part, the differences in interpretations are due to the self-corrective and cumulative effort of scientists to understand and control the world, and in part, but more fundamentally, they are due to the nature of human activity, to social factors."

Realism simply means that the world is as it is independent of our modes of representation. Thus inquiry is a laborious process of getting "feedback" about our chosen frameworks, rather than discovering that theory does correspond to some physical reality, or has inductive or practical success. C.S. Peirce and Karl Popper argued in a similar fashion, but they emphasized that the feedback was always the result of efforts to control natural processes. Farber expands this process to include the social and cultural factors that affect our choice of theoretical categories. Thus Farber tried to distinguish critical naturalism from a narrowly technical or pragmatic theory of knowledge, while simultaneously avoiding the existential effort to block instrumentalism with the anti-naturalist argument that subjectivity cannot be reduced to being.

In the Frankfurt School this realist response to historicism and relativism comes out in the argument, e.g., in Adorno, for "the autonomy of the object" or the separation of the subject-object dialectic from nature. Husserl, however, abandoned realism on Kantian grounds. He concluded that the only alternative to technical fetishism in science is a pure phenomenology of consciousness. Consciousness cannot, for Husserl, be the object of any science and must take its place as the philosophical inquiry into the pure possibility of experience; a systematic transcendental reflection. By "pure" Husserl means that reflection brackets or suspends both instrumental success and ontological commitments of the sciences.

Farber, and subsequently Adorno, argued that this move toward purity in phenomenology opened the door to "metaphysical theism." But the weakness in Farber's reply to Husserl was that he had to take *a priori* scientific interpretations as privileged and authoritative. Thus he underestimated the implications of reconstructing the sciences as a history of "proliferating interpretations." Farber never fully confronted the tension between his naturalist, realist position and the cultural historicism that he tried to encompass with the term "critical." However, neither did the Frankfurt School decide how it would reconcile its defense of naturalism as resistance to "making all of nature a workhouse" with its fully historicist account of concept formation.

Many of the early articles in *Telos* explored the history of science and the scientific revolution from an anti-realist, historicist perspective; a perspective freed from Marxist materialism but using concepts of alienation, fetishism, and exchange. *Telos* did not fully follow Farber, Lukács, or Adorno in their concern with the threats of irrationalism, mysticism, and theism. The journal

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concerned itself more centrally with the problems involved in realizing a critical, self-reflective social theory.

The critique of the sciences that *Telos* carried over from these philosophical debates was applied to Marxism as a case study. Since the journal began by rejecting the search for "scientific status," its interest was in the alternative accounts of Marxism as a critical philosophy. There were two major traditions to explore. First was the historicism of Labriola, Gramsci, Lukács and Korsch; second was the Critical Theory approach of the Frankfurt School. I want to consider briefly the fate of these two options.

Traditionally Marxism was treated either as a natural, scientific theory or a reflection of historical conditions. The difficulty is that the first position grounds an historical interpretation in problematic natural laws, and the second is in tension with the theory's central notion of ideology. Why should the reflection in one case (namely, Marx's own theory) result in universal categories, such as abstract labor, while in other cases it leads to ideological categories such as equal exchange? Marxist historicism, the work that emerged from those who came to Marx from Hegel and German Idealism, offered the solution that a subjective vantage point of universality emerges within history as its theoretical and practical ground. Both Gramsci and Lukács claimed that Marxist historicism solved the issue of relativism precisely because it did not embrace the goal of representation, as found in the natural sciences. The argument was, like Hegel, that within relative historical expressions there is an internal, immanent universality. There can be truth in history, even though all categories express their worlds with equal accuracy, because consciousness of this diversity of representations leads to self-reflection and self-criticism; thus historical consciousness eventually produces a reflective, though not pictorial, certainty about its own conditions.

But historicist Marxism, like the Leninist realism it was meant to replace, is an "apocalyptic," dogmatic solution. It argues that knowledge of history is possible because of the possession of the appropriate consciousness. It therefore assumes an order or direction in the events of history which culminates in just the same kind of mysterious guarantee of reference and truth as Leninism. The problem is that either historicism is a version of Marxism in which historical actions are critically judged by limited standards of political success and failure (not by the fantasy of natural laws) or it is a claim that there is a truth to history beyond these relative, heuristic guidelines for action. But the deeper truth that transcends our present interests cannot in turn be justified by a certain consciousness of our present. That will simply mean that in practice historicism judges actions by their effects (taking the present as its source for criteria), but in theory treats its judgment as true irrespective of those present results. To mix historicism with certainty produced the same practice as Leninism and the same repression of criticism; it offered pragmatic strategies and relative justifications under the guise of a unique claim to be disinterested and unchallenged in its certainty.

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Althusser's attempt to produce an alternative theory of science for orthodox Marxism can be seen as a response to this problem. Though *Telos* immediately took his path as a dead end and predicted it would fall back into orthodoxy, Althusser's original interest in the history and philosophy of science came from the same theoretical impulse. But I want to conclude with a discussion of the second alternative explored in *Telos*, since the option of founding a science of history was never taken seriously.

In the case of Critical Theory the main problem was how to make the distinction between critical and traditional theory. Though there is a lengthy article by Horkheimer on this very issue, the argument seemed to operate in the reverse, that is, certain philosophers were already understood to be traditional, e.g., Descartes, and certain were understood to be critical, e.g., Marx. Horkheimer then induced from this classification, which was assumed without defense, what made the respective theories different. One searches in vain, however, for what would allow one to project the nature of critical theory into the future. Horkheimer's argument often appeals, lacking any other distinctive characteristic, to the "unity of theory and practice." This argument is simply the hidden vestige of orthodox Marxism and scientism within the critical tradition. The argument for the unity of theory and practice must hold that there is a necessary link between theoretical concepts and practical activities, and I believe it is another case of the Frankfurt School's flirtation with realism. But unlike the historicist tradition, in which the links between theory and practice are themselves conditioned, this defense of "critical" theory assumes that interpretive indeterminacy gives way to the real, causal necessity of political practice. But that is precisely the issue; the lack of any necessity for practice other than the relative justifications of practical or functional success.

In the introduction to *The Crisis*, Husserl ascribes the responsibility for the terrible cultural state of the world following WWI to bad philosophy. He argues that since clear thinking is needed for sound social action, and such clarity is the point of philosophy, philosophers have, in effect, failed to supply humanity with the necessary foundations and direction. Farber added: "Ideally, Husserl had a point. But the more widespread adoption of a general logic, conceived as a comprehensive methodology, which would comprise subjective procedures, among other methods, would be far more to the point. Even so, one must be careful not to commit what may be called the 'rationalistic fallacy,' or 'rationalistic dogma,' according to which the acceptance of general principles necessarily lead to the indicated goals." He suggests that, in any real social conflict of interests there simply will be, in all probability, no agreement on what is "objectively right" in terms of action, and to deny the role of such conflict is precisely to become authoritarian and dogmatic. Therefore, if that fundamental aspect of Critical Theory remained unclear, one can now see the context for various debates in *Telos* about "artificial negativity." In other words, to argue that what had once passed for criticism has now become

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"functional" in late industrial society was precisely to argue for the indeterminacy of the distinction between traditional and critical theory. Once that indeterminacy is admitted, it is impossible to secure an unambiguous or necessary praxis from any sufficiently complex theoretical account.

Telos created, to its credit I think, a set of theoretical and political dilemmas. I hope my brief outline allows the theoretical dilemma to emerge. The journal rejected realism, positivism, instrumentalism, pragmatism, and naturalism. For a while it flirted with a kind of "new historicism" in which some hope appeared of theoretically avoiding realism and instrumentalism through an account of knowledge as cultural expression. However, it never systematically worked through the problems of skepticism and relativism built into that position. The theoretical dilemma for *Telos* was its distrust of scientific or philosophical certainty, combined with its philosophical suspicion about the role of opinion or heuristic guidelines for action. The journal was on swampy ground.

The political dilemma was even more apparent and acute. The *Telos* "party line" was that such social movements as civil rights, welfare reform, ecology, feminism, or "socialism with a human face" were criticized functionally, that is, these struggles were interpreted as strategies, not of radical opposition to power but of a useful and even necessary feedback for the expansion of a managerial state. Even those who were skeptical that "artificial negativity" raised functionalism to the level of a metaphysical principle were never "affirmative" about any social or cultural movement; "affirmation," for most of the editors, was a theoretical *faux pas*. But the journal did not attack reform because it claimed to deduce from its theory a better alternative. The suspicion of such social movements had to be done on the more limited grounds of showing that they failed to live up to their most radical self-conception. This immanent critique, however, was never allowed to become a positive political program. The functional critiques allowed a "space" for critical reflection precisely by freeing it from the immediate demand to be politically relevant. To tie that freed critical reflection to any action only threatened to instrumentalize theory once again. Hence the dilemma.

I think these reflections at least put into context why certain debates in the journal never quite got off the ground but caused a good deal of tension. Specifically the discussions about the importance of Habermas' new grounding of Critical Theory and, on the practical side, the attitude toward European and East European social movements caused editorial resignations but no effective public debate. In the case of Habermas, who has pursued a non-historicist ground for Critical Theory, it was the result of having left hanging the debate between philosophy and the social sciences. Those with philosophical concerns simply stared in disbelief at his labored efforts to revive linguistic analysis; though it was understandable, if my account of the theoretical issues is at least plausible, why he felt analysis was the only viable option left. But for those who survived the late 60s in philosophy, Habermas' rediscovery of Austin, Grice, and Searle was neither exciting nor promising; especially since

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Habermas' belated revival of analysis coincided with the growing recognition within the analytic tradition that the "linguistic turn" had been a failure. Politically, Habermas's work on "discourse ethics" was leading to a Kantian defense of universalization, that effectively ignored the whole historicist critical tradition. However, the position for those in the social sciences was that, since *Telos* had nothing better to offer, Habermas' version of Critical Theory provided some kind of structure. For some, the *Telos* tendency toward theory-smashing was a matter for anxiety; there certainly was no Feyerabendian glee about the opportunity for theoretical innovation.

The *Telos* treatment of Eastern Europe and "Third Worldism" was probably the most tendentious issue. Oddly enough, these very concrete analyses of social opposition actually return us to the very abstract reflections that began this paper. The issue about these movements was the complete absence of a theoretical analysis of social change. Clearly, socialist governments, like Western governments, operate simply on a bureaucratic, managerial model. But the issue for *Telos* was the self-understanding of oppositional forces, and this led to acrimonious misunderstandings. The journal often criticized Left oppositions for both an *ad hoc* eclecticism about theory and ultimately their reactionary defenses of it. In that context, it was argued, the managerial bureaucracies did not fare too badly. This point was not to defend moribund authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in Latin American or Eastern Europe, but to warn about basing an opposition on such notoriously weak concepts as "rights" (which operate without ambiguity only where the legal, liberal structure already exists) or such blatantly reactionary concepts as ethnicity, nationalism or theological revivals. In effect, the theoretical context of such marginal resistance in the first and third world was nihilism.

Here, unfortunately, history has proved *Telos* right; to use a bad historicist argument. The rhetoric of the New Left did little more than perfume an opposition to imperialism, colonialism, racism, and the expansion of international capital that was, in the real world rather than the "possible worlds" of idealized commitment, mostly retrograde and authoritarian. The theoretical vacuum, which I discussed as the collapse of both Marxist historicism and Critical Theory, was subsequently filled by such nightmare follies as Islamic fundamentalism, applied savage barbarism (Pol Pot, The Shining Path guerrillas, Idi Amin) or finally, and on the whole probably less horrible, inefficient, backward versions of bureaucratic socialism; but wherein technical decision-making was made worse by nationalist and ethnic corruption.

These reflections have, of course, made it sound like all these concerns were compressed into one single discussion. Further, by trying to isolate debates that often did not surface clearly or directly in the articles published I am falsifying the fundamental experience of the journal. Perhaps the final lesson of a journal titled *Telos* is to read with a suspicious, ironic, and critical eye, starting with titles. . . .

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Recalling Telos

Paul Breines

Meeting Telos

My connection to the journal began in 1969 at a *Socialist Scholars' Conference* held at Hofstra University on Long Island. Some *Telos* readers will recall that, long before the SSC's recent reincarnation under the auspices of the Democratic Socialist Alliance, it had a predecessor that had been launched in the mid-1960s by some of the editors of *Studies on the Left*, along with John Cammett, Ann Lane, Helmut Gruber and others. It convened once a year for the next four or five years and then faded. The 1965 gathering at the Statler Hilton Hotel on 42nd Street in Manhattan featured a plenary session that was to have been highlighted by an exchange between Isaac Deutscher and Herbert Marcuse.

As it happened, Marcuse was unable to attend. The space left by his absence was provocatively filled by the third featured speaker, Shane Mage, who was then on his way out of the Trotskyist movement. Deutscher's powerful speech closed with ringing words to the effect that, while workers can be corrupted, and while the workers' party and its leaders can be corrupted, the working *class* is incorruptible. This reply to Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* was greeted by the proverbial stormy applause, even from the younger skeptics who, while doubting Deutscher's message, were moved by his passion and his history. Mage's presentation, calling for a synthesis of LSD and Marx's critique of alienation, virtually tore the proceedings wide open and crystallized the emergent rift between Old and New Lefts. At the '66 or '67 gathering, Marcuse did appear, along with Abbie Hoffman, Martin Nicolaus, and Greg Calvert, at another overflow session, by which time the momentum had clearly shifted to the New Left.

Then the 1969 *Socialist Scholars' Conference*, which may have been the last one prior to its more recent rebirth, offered among other panels, one on Marcuse and the American Left. Ron Aronson's long, personal, and intriguing "Dear Herbert" was the centerpiece on which Stanley Aronowitz, Martin Jay, myself, and (I believe) Paul Buhle and Jim O'Brien of *Radical America* commented. The panel's task was to flesh out the links between the vibrant and

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hopeful but largely anti-intellectual US student movement and Marcuse's densely Germanic, Hegelian-Heideggerian-Frankfurt Schoolian revolutionary pessimism.

The substance of that discussion need not be reconstructed here, since all of this is simply a preface to the observation that, for a number of us who participated in the 1969 SSC, the high point was the personal encounter with the editor and some of the staff of a journal called *Telos*, the first issue of which had appeared the previous year. I remember a lively discussion, following the panel on Marcuse, at one of the literature tables in the lobby. Bob D'Amico, still a *Telos* editor, may have been there, along with Silvia Federici, numerous of whose articles appeared in early issues, Jim Hansen, who, with Paul Piccone, was then co-translating Enzo Paci's book on phenomenological Marxism, and Alex Delfini, who, again with Piccone, was finishing an essay on "Herbert Marcuse's Heideggerian Marxism," which appeared in *Telos* 6.

I doubt if anyone from that original *Telos* crew, which had made its way to Hofstra from the journal's first home base in the Philosophy Department at SUNY at Buffalo, would dispute the observation that, then as now, Paul Piccone was not easy to ignore. His neatly groomed hair, well-starched white shirt, and natty suit and tie stood out against the backdrop of hirsute scruffiness that was coming to typify movement style. The distinct impression that one was not dealing with a fellow suburbanite was amplified by the thick fingers and thick skin of the hand that briskly shook mine. Then came the main thing, the voice, which, after a brief warm-up, shifted into its now familiar but then quite extraordinary staccato mode, bursting with animation to the point that it seemed constantly on the verge of taking flight not only from the Italo-American accent that barely controlled it, but from the very realm of spoken language itself. Volleys of sharp notes pinged one's brain: phenomenological-Marxism-Lukács-Husserl-*Lebenswelt*-yah-sure-cretins-country-bumkins-Adorno-right-but-he-didn't-get-Husserl-straight-of-course-of-course-early-Lukács-was-a-phenomenological-Marxist-and-so-are-you-Sartre-Merleau-Ponty-crisis-of-the-human-sciences-positivism-Marxism-trapped-in-the-very-contradictions-it-sought-to-overcome-so-why-not-come-to-work-for-the-journal-sure-sure-think-about-it.

Following a month or so of correspondence with Piccone and several other editors, I joined up. In the intensely charged atmosphere of 1968-69, the discovery of a group of people and a new journal with interests nearly identical to one's own was altogether compelling, indeed, irresistible. Here was a lively circle, whose consuming passion was research into and reflection on the formation of the 20th century's various heretical Leftist currents and their relation to the future. But while the political and intellectual contexts are of obvious and major import, I find it impossible to consider 20 years of *Telos* without placing Piccone at the center of the journal's everything-but-centered narrative. Many others have worked, even slaved away, often thanklessly, above all in the sphere of what may be remembered as *Telos*' major contribution,

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namely its translations into English of material by Marcuse, Horkheimer, Adorno, Lukács, Kosik, Sartre, and others. And it may be that the number of those affected by Piccone's energy, warmth, generosity, and integrity is equalled by those who have felt burned or found it necessary to break with him and with the journal. In numerous instances, they are the same people. My point, though, is not just that Piccone has been in the thick of the journal's history since the start, but that he is the thick of it. The feeling of loyalty is one of the best, and I have always been grateful to Piccone's marvellous capacity to elicit it, in myself and others around him.

On the occasion of the start of *Telos*' third decade and in view of the preceding comments, then, it may be worth considering a matter that for some time now has occupied many people with connections to the journal: is Paul Piccone in fact a figure without historical precedent? Actually, although the evidence remains inconclusive, it does appear that the little-known figure from the pre-WWI Italian Left, Pietro Spina, may be a Piccone prototype. Some readers will recognize the name as that of the main character in Ignazio Silone's great novel, *Bread and Wine*, but it is not to this fictional Spina that I refer. A real Pietro Spina was rediscovered in 1974 by a young historian from the German Democratic Republic, Karl Heinz Naedelschwanz, who corresponded with several *Telos* editors in the mid-1970s, but then stopped all contact with us. A passage from one of his letters is worth citing at some length since it suggests terms in which we might at least begin to discuss Piccone as a type on the Left rather than as an altogether *sui generis* figure. According to Naedelschwanz, then, "Pietro Spina was one of the more important, if less-known associates of Gian Carlo Biazin's group, itself a rather arcane formation within the political culture of *fin de siècle* anarcho-syndicalism. Under the pseudonym, Nicola Fozza, Spina wrote the preface to the 1909 edition of Biazin's manifesto, "Il futuro della storia" which, however, was never actually published. Biazin's widow, Angelina, claims in her memoir, *La Mia Vita con Biazin*, that the sole copy of the manuscript was lost in the mail between Turin and Siena. The preface was Spina's only known piece of writing [Piccone, by contrast, has been a prolific essayist and author of a major book], in spite of the fact that he [Spina] was alleged to have possessed one of the first typewriters equipped with a polyglot keyboard. I should add that there are, of course, conflicting stories regarding the disappearance of the Biazin manuscript, although these must be appraised with a certain skepticism. Such stories can be found in the profusely illustrated volume, *Contra Biazin*, compiled by some members of the circle around Kemal Bordega, known as the Sardinian Turk. This group, calling itself "I Militanti," had it in for Biazin not only on political grounds, but also because Angelina Biazin was unreceptive to Bordega's advances. Bordega's group, otherwise among the most reliable of the Left-syndicalists, was notoriously protective of their occasionally psychopathic leader's love life. My own views on the matter of the manuscript are still unsettled, but this information may in the meantime be of some use to

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you. As you know, after Biazin's untimely death from asphyxiation — he swallowed a cigar during a heated debate with the charismatic Luxemburgist and feminist, Tripolina della Donna, in Florence in 1912. Above the door to the *gelateria* in front of which Biazin fell, there is a small commemorative plaque. To this day, members of the (amazingly, still extant) Bordega group are fond of rubbing ices on it — his widow, Angelina, met Bodo Scheisskopf (at the 1922 Zurich conference) and began her tortuous affair with him. This is background to the well-established fact that Spina, in spite of the paucity of his published writings, was the intellectual driving force of the Biazin group. No mention of this can be found in *La Mia Vita con Biazin* for reasons that are perhaps understandable. Oddly, the Bordega group seems to have had a modicum of affection for Spina. In *Contra Biazin*, one contributor alleges that Spina was in fact the author of the entire manifesto, not merely of the preface. This we will be able to verify when the manuscript, which awaits careful study, is at last found."

Western Marxism and the Search for Marginality

Clearly, this evidence is too thin to bear the weight of the claim that Spina is a kind of forerunner of Piccone, but the matter is worth reflection, if for no other reason than to place the Piccone-myth into historical perspective. In any event, the journal, too, can be reconsidered historically, and here there are three major moments or phases. The first, most important, and most obvious of these ran from the start in 1968 to roughly the mid-1970s. It centered around the journal's retrieval and transmission to our generation of US New Leftists of the "Western Marxist" and "Ultra-Left" currents of theory, which we understood to be a kind of anticipation in thought of the anti-authoritarian movements of the 1960s. The temptation to wax nostalgic about this halcyon phase is strong, but rather than yield to it, I want to note only the following: what now would be termed *Telos*' discourse of Western Marxism was, in relation to the main trends of Marxism between the 1920s and the 1950s (Stalinism and Social Democracy), an historically vital effort which, however, also had its regressive aspects. Chief among these is that the very impulse to construct a historical tradition for ourselves tended to blind us to much of the originality of our own historical situation and of the social movement to which we were definitely, if often uneasily, linked.

Although the reasons differed, the movement itself, or in any case its dominant segments, proved no more adept at grasping and sustaining its own novelty, choosing instead to take its own life by overdosing on various neo-Stalinist and related sectarian pills. As to the journal itself in this, its first phase, the late '60s and early 70s saw a series of annual occasions known as *Telos* Conferences, some of which might be thought of as philosophical harbingers of the more recent and far more popular phenomenon known as "Wrestlemania." Some general features of these conferences can be briefly recalled. For one thing, they highlighted the fact that the journal's relation to

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the active, mass movement of the New Left was always packed with tensions, whose structure is easily summarized by recalling that, toward the close of every conference, some one or group from among those participating would rise, virtually on cue, to inquire, after extensive colloquies on Hegel, reification, phenomenology, and so forth: so what does all this crap have to do with the revolution? Recriminations against mindless activism would then fly fast and furiously past rejoinders about cop-out intellectuals and elitist theorists, with order being restored only when the activists finally exited in disgust.

On another level, however, the structure of these tensions is more complex and interesting, connected as it is to the issue now being extensively debated, thanks to Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals*, for surely the *Telos* story is part of the larger process of neo-Marxism's academicization. The second concerns what we *thought* we were doing while we were actually being transformed, and were transforming ourselves, from young critical theorists into academic specialists: we were trying to carve out an identity for ourselves as radical intellectuals in and against our specific, American political culture. The interesting element here is, of course, the particular identity we sought, and I would characterize it as a quest for a kind of internal exile and marginality in relation to both academia and the Left.

Regarding academia and academicization, and at the risk of romanticizing the journal's pioneer days, it is worth remembering that publishing in *Telos* was not exactly a ticket to success in university circles. The journal was new, its staff inexperienced, and its survival far from certain. Although it proclaimed itself to be a philosophical publication, its actual disciplinary attachment was hardly clear, which to most academics signified incoherence rather than promise, not to mention the fact that, instead of currying favor or buttering careerist bread, the opening editorial statements in the early issues calmly denounced as totally bankrupt and conformist virtually every known school of American philosophy. The editorial group, moreover, was composed of graduate students, meaning that manuscripts were not refereed by known scholars. Finally, in this connection, *Telos* was emphatically and explicitly linked to Marxism and to the Left at a time when intellectual work from this camp had not yet achieved credibility in university environs.

We did not, then, seek academic acceptance and integration. On the other hand, thanks to our own failure of nerve or to the typical New Left inability to create durable counter-institutions, we neither sought nor were we beckoned by spaces outside the university where we might have carried on the sort of intellectual work to which we were committed. In addition, as Jacoby has emphasized, bohemia was no longer a viable option. Perhaps we harbored the illusion that we could, as radical intellectuals, preserve the integrity of a certain marginality by remaining permanent graduate students, linked to but not engulfed by the professoriate above and the then-burgeoning student/youth revolt below — an illusion that quickly dissipated as at least some of us became junior faculty in the mid-1970s. I am more certain that we harbored

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the not-quite-as-illusory but not-easily-negotiated hope of sustaining some sort of marginal or outsider position within the university structure. With varying degrees of success and failure, we continue to do so.

To make more sense of this effort, it needs to be said that we sought a similar marginality, independence, or semi-exile from the New Left itself, of which we understood ourselves to be a part. This double strategy (which I am proposing in retrospect; I cannot recall explicit discussions of it at the time) was, for example, reflected in the journal's notoriously hermetic style, with our own writings self-consciously imitating the dense neo-Marxist dialectics of the Central European classics we were studying and translating. Here, again, I think our (unconscious) goal was neither to impress the professors nor to persuade the activists, but instead to construct a language and imagery of cultural-political self-definition or identity. This, it should quickly be added, is not intended to deny or to denigrate the seriousness of the enterprise, the political, intellectual, and moral passion with which it was pursued; on the contrary, it is meant to highlight it.

Telos' "double strategy" of marginality was also expressed in our choice of models, the authors of the great texts we were reading and transmitting: Lukács, Korsch, Bloch, Gramsci, Pannekoek, Landauer (who, however, falls outside the Western Marxist frame), the Frankfurt School theorists, Goldmann, Paci, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Kosik and so on. To be sure, this is not a univocal community of thinkers; differences among them abound, not least in connection with the very theme I am suggesting. Given the important variations, however, these Left-wing intellectuals nevertheless share a certain marginality, a condition of exile or outsiderness, in relation to both the established institutions and the revolutionary movements of their day. An anecdote is appropriate here. At an early *Telos* conference (in Waterloo, Ontario), Robin Blackburn of *New Left Review* addressed the following question to several of us who had just completed a panel dealing with Lukács and Bloch: This is all quite interesting, he observed, but why are you people, presumably Marxists, so preoccupied with figures who clearly had so little political impact; who barely had audiences? Why so little attention to the Lenins, Maos, and Fidels? I do not recall how any of us responded at the time, but I would say now that the very lack of political success, the distance from actual power typical of these figures, their isolation, are in crucial respects the very things that drew us to them, their marginality serving as the ideal outpost for the activity of continual criticism. That we ourselves, for reasons both circumstantial and subjective, were in fact far less marginal than were our models and heroes is also part of the picture — the picture of *Telos*' formative desires.

Another notable dimension of the journal's sought-after marginality is the nearly complete absence from its pages of any sense of connection with the traditions and legacies of American radicalism, including even those individual figures with richly marginal attributes, among them Veblen, Bourne, Mumford, and Mills. The contrast with several other contemporary New Left

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journals is suggestive here. *Radical America*, which began roughly when *Telos* did, and *Studies on the Left* (as well as its indirect successor, *Socialist Revolution* (now *Socialist Review*), for example, have all vigorously sought to articulate a firmly native American radicalism, and have consistently tried to maintain, as *Telos* never has, close links to popular social movements in this country. Indeed, in 20 years of quarterly publication, the articles in *Telos* that even reckon directly with American society and culture are few and quite far between. In this connection, the contrast with the British *New Left Review* is equally pertinent, since it, too, has drawn deeply from the well of continental Western Marxism and has been similarly vehement in its critique of the positivist-empiricist frame of reference of its native (British) Leftist tradition. The significant contrast here is that, unlike *Telos*, *NLR* has consistently engaged that native tradition, confronting it head-on, reappraising and seeking to reorient its history, while challenging as well numerous dimensions of the regnant English culture.

Telos never undertook any such effort. In part, of course, this is because *Telos* has always been a less immediately political and less Marxist journal than *NLR*. But in larger part, I believe we did not really want Western Marxism to serve as a bridge connecting us more closely to the American New Left and to America itself. Instead, Western Marxism was for us a kind of place, space, or home in its own right; Western Marxism, a marginal intellectual culture from the start, was itself the margin we chose to occupy. As Leftist critics of the consumerized and "totally administered" society of late capitalism in the US, we were not exempt from its pressures, including the pressure to find roots, community, and identity amidst their ongoing dissolution. We thus became American squatters at the cosmopolitan address of Western Marxism, Leftist Europhiles carrying on, among other tasks, the battle of our adopted continental forebears against what in our own country had long since triumphed, namely, *Americanisierung*.

Such a strategy of internal exile is, of course, not without precedent in American (or any other) cultural history; nor, in its general form, was it peculiar in our generation which, after all, also witnessed a proliferation of attachments to various Eastern religious cults offering alternative life styles (as distinct from alternative lives) to what Mel Brooks' and Carl Reiner's imaginary scholar from India, Dr. Sabu Panchali, called the "ball-bearing" quality of American life. Nor was this impulse unique within the New Left, broad segments of which became, during the Vietnam War, radically estranged from things American and fervently attached to pre-industrial peasant-nationalist movements against US imperialism. These parallels obviously need to be qualified, since the examples of Eastern religious cults and New Left Third Worldism express a hostility to modernity that contrasts significantly with the modernism of Western Marxism. Then again, when one thinks, for example, of Lukács' "romantic anti-capitalism," Marcuse's neo-Heideggerian critique of technology (and *Telos* Press' publication of Gustav Landauer's anti-industrial *For Socialism*), it

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emerges that, in Western Marxism as a whole as well as within many of its individual voices, there are notable tensions and torsions around attitudes toward modernity. Marshall Berman's *All That is Solid Melts into Air: Experiences of Modernity* is in this connection very suggestive about Marx' own work, but is mistaken about the one-sided hostility to modernity in Marcuse's. Regarding New Left embraces of Third World revolutionary movements as exemplary instances of anti-American anti-modernism — and even some *Telos* associates were capable of more than passing flirtations with Maoism; *Critical Interruptions: New Left Perspectives on Herbert Marcuse* (1970), which I edited, was dedicated to T.W. Adorno and Ho Chi Minh, both of whom had recently died — such attitudes tended to overlook the deeply and often repressively modernizing impulses of such movements.

Anti-Communism

Before turning to the second of the journal's major moments or phases to date, I want to note an element of ambiguity in *Telos*' anti- or non-Americanism. During the mid-1970s, which constitute a kind of transition period, we were aware of a certain drift and haziness regarding the journal's direction. It was inescapably clear that the New Left had fizzled as a mass social movement and potentially viable counter-culture, a development that pushed us into what was dubbed our holding-pattern, where we continued to cultivate our Western Marxist gardens, but without the passion and energizing hopes of the previous period. Around this time, one began to hear talk at editorial group meetings of the idea of a special "American issue," the very notion of which indicates our marginality even as it points to an impulse to overcome it.

As I write, talk of an Americanization (and demarginalization) of *Telos* is again on the table, and perhaps this time more will emerge. In the mid-70s, meanwhile, although the gestures toward taking up American themes indicated cracks in the armor of our internal exile, they never became more than that. Part of the reason they did not was simply that some editors, myself included, opposed the idea of a turn to America, while those who were more supportive were evidently not yet ready to write the required essays. Beyond that, the American turn was not negotiated then, because by roughly 1977 another pole and preoccupation beckoned more compellingly than did the US scene: really existing socialism. By the last third of the decade, several editors and some new voices within the journal began to move toward an increasingly fervent critique and rejection of Soviet-type societies. By 1980 this had sprouted into a fully articulated anti-Communism.

This second substantial moment in *Telos*' itinerary was generated by several factors, one of which has already been indicated, namely, the journal's drift and relative lack of focus, which meant that it was overripe for a shift. More importantly, *Telos*, or at least a number of its editors, were ready to respond sympathetically and often enthusiastically to the far-reaching process of reappraisal, disillusionment, and defection that was making its way through the

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international Left in the mid- and late 1970s. Many in our circle were deeply affected by the new atmosphere emerging from publication of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipeligo* studies and the commentaries on them from Paris — primarily those of Castoriadis and Lefort, but the *nouveaux philosophes* as well. The entrance into the editorial group of Victor Zaslavsky, an emigré from the USSR, and Ferenc Feher and Agnes Heller, at that time in Australia, having recently left their native Hungary, brought the new criticisms of Soviet society, Marxism, and Western Marxism itself directly into the *Telos* circle, which is not to imply that they functioned as outside agitators, a point to which I will return. The formation of "Solidarity," and the whole societal crisis in Poland lent added intensity and focus to the journal's new direction.

As I saw things in the early 1980s, then, *Telos* was assuming a new political profile. To be sure, it had clear roots in the journal's earlier development — *Telos*, after all, was virtually from the start critical of Bolshevism, Dialectical Materialism, and Soviet society. This dimension was now being pushed in novel and, at least for a time, dynamic directions. At its core, and in my view its most attractive element, was what can be summarized as a shift from critique of Soviet-type systems to a hatred of them. To this were added the results of a more global reappraisal, according to which: Soviet society is dominated by its military, virtually impervious to reform, and expansionist; it presents a greater threat to peace than does US imperialism, while the latter, so the new outlook proposed, was, in such areas as Latin America, a less malignant force than many Leftists had assumed; the purportedly civilizing and personal-freedom-enhancing dimensions of capitalism, moreover, were highlighted and affirmed against what was alleged to be their long-standing neglect by Leftists; and finally, social movements, specifically peace movements, were to be appraised by a new litmus test, namely, whether or not such movements played into Soviet hands.

That this amounted to an articulation within the journal of the broader neo-conservative tendency underway outside seemed to me, as it did to some other editors as well as some discontended readers, quite obvious. But that only enhanced, as I suggested just above, its dynamism. For leaving aside the substance of the issues, *Telos*' new anti-communism drew energy from the very act of violating a number of not only Old Left but also New Left taboos, and transgression (in political if not in social or cultural terms) is in our milieu a highly valued activity.

I make no claims to neutrality or even to caution in offering this account, since I was party to the disputes generated by *Telos*' second moment and, by the mid-1980s, was one of several editors who resigned because of them. Rather than review the details of those disputes, however, I want to touch on two general features of the whole *Telos* situation at the time, which is, after all, the recent past. The first thing to be said here is that, while the new anti-communism played the major role in generating divisions within and departures from the journal, those divisions and departures were also overdetermined.

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By the middle of this decade, the *Telos* group passed through — and is continuing to pass through — its major upheaval and fragmentation. While, again, political differences were central, it should also be noted that a number of editors, for example, had also been drifting away from the journal due to new intellectual interests, fatigue, boredom, and so forth. At the same time, as the smoke was clearing from *Telos*' resettlement on Manhattan's lower east side, some new editorial associates were joining up. Finally, in this regard, while something like Left and Right-wing factions did form, they remained murky and neither one had any monopoly on resignations-in-protest which, moreover, were as often as not based on the politics of editorial style, process, and decision-making as they were on global politics.

The second general matter on which I want to comment is what *Telos*' anti-communism indicates about the specific form of Leftism that has characterized the journal from the start. In taking up this matter, I need first to retrieve the point made just above to the effect that the turn to anti-communism was not the result of "outside agitators" or, for that matter, the machinations of a cabal within the editorial group. Having emphasized there the extent to which that turn, while organic, constituted something new in the journal's trajectory, I now want to stress the opposite: while it was a turn to something new, it was nevertheless organically connected to the journal's past and perhaps even to something close to its essence. And I need to retrieve the more general theme of this essay, namely, *Telos*' marginality.

Having suggested the ways in which *Telos*' Western Marxism, intellectualism, and Europhilic anti-Americanism are constitutive elements of that marginality, I now want to add another, specifically in connection with the journal's position within, that is, on the margins of, the Left. Beyond its specifically political critiques of dogmatism, centralism, authoritarianism, and conformism, and at the heart of *Telos*' gadfly relation to the New Left, the journal has been animated by a certain split sensibility, a kind of creative schizophrenia. That is, it has chosen a way of being on the Left that includes an inclination toward disloyalty to the Left, due no doubt to a still deeper loyalty to criticism and independence. It is motivated by an anti-fellow-traveling impulse; by a kind of Orwellian tendency toward separateness. And while on the subject of (perhaps) creative schizophrenia, I would like, before spelling out my own distance from this key aspect of *Telos*' picture, to record my connection to it.

The Present, or the Moment Yet to Come

Coincidentally, as the journal marks its 20th birthday, it finds itself facing something like a new phase and the prospect of a third moment. While it may belabor the obvious, it should be said that this very scheme of *Telos*' phases and moments reduces the densely gelatinous, multicolored, and, of course, always already decentered swirls of the journal's biography to terms that are at once too clear and too plain. In other words, I have left out a great deal. And

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it needs to be said as well, that neither of the two main moments through which we have so far passed is itself a thing of the past. On the contrary, in a series of altered and still changing forms, Western Marxism and anti-communism continue to shape (and to be shaped by) the journal's activities. At the same time, though, it now seems evident that the anti-communist moment and its attendant focus on the USSR and Soviet-bloc countries is receding as the journal's dominant focus. This is in large measure due to the departure from *Telos* of a number of this moment's main voices, but may also be due to the Gorbachev era, which seems to have opened doors to chances for internal reforms within Soviet-type societies which the journal's anti-communism did not really anticipate. All of this, then, in tandem with the grotesque gurgles of a dying Reaganism, has *Telos* gazing, with the enthusiasm and uncertainty befitting a 20-year old, at its own next moment. Having rejoined the *Telos* fold after an absence of about a year and a half, following my resignation in the mid-1980s, I have not been actively engaged in the work of the journal. I mention this because it provides a sound excuse for not predicting the likely outlines of *Telos*' future and for not pontificating at length on the direction it ought to take. The following may suffice instead.

As mentioned earlier, talk of increased focus on American themes and problems has resurfaced. This is, indeed, already reflected in numerous articles published in the past several years, while the continuation of commentaries on Eastern Europe and the recent (and immediately infamous) special issue on Carl Schmitt are reminders that the focuses of the journal's previous moments are still active. The recent forum, to which a number of editors contributed, on Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals* is especially interesting here. One wonders, for example, how representative Jacoby's own intellectual itinerary — and he is a *Telos* associate of long standing — may be, since his much discussed new book itself entails a shift to American preoccupations in contrast to the Western Marxist and Critical Theory focus of his previous works. The forum on *The Last Intellectuals*, moreover, indicates that the journal is now grappling directly with questions of its historic marginality and of the possibilities (and the risks) of overcoming it by bringing the *Telos* heritage more directly and regularly to bear on the US scene.

We are fortunate, in this connection, to have an editor-in-chief who will most likely see to it that *Telos* is not in danger of becoming a mainstream publication. Meanwhile, in relation to present and forthcoming "new social movements," the journal as a whole is likely to sustain its position of gadfly, since it will continue to be one of the voices, along with libertarians and numerous post-structuralists, that are quick to question the authoritarian, conformist, intolerant, and silencing elements of revolutions. Here, however, I believe *Telos*' main task will be to take more seriously than it has until now its own most essential trait. To transcend its marginality, it will need to deepen it; will need to become conscious, in the terminology of postmodernism, of the silencings that constitute its own (marginal) master narrative. For while the

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journal's marginality is authentic, it is also a representation of its power within a white, male, and heterosexual-dominated radicalism, not to mention the society-at-large. For some of the main philosophical and political others of the 20th century left (Western Marxism and the victims and opponents of really existing socialism), we have had a good ear; to racial, and especially gender and sexual others on the American scene, we have been largely tone-deaf and occasionally worse. This is not the journal's only paradox, but it is a substantial one. It is also a paradox that lends itself to being worked through by a quest not to diminish *Telos*' present marginality, but to make it richer and more expansive . . .

Our East European Telos

Sharon Zukin

During the years I was associated with *Telos*, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, Eastern Europe emerged as a more compelling political subject than it had been since the 1948 coups or maybe even the 1918 revolutions. Eastern Europe was the real reason I joined *Telos*. Having culled some knowledge about political life in Belgrade from several research trips, I responded to a self-serving official statement about political repression in Yugoslavia that the journal somehow published in 1973-74. When my reply actually appeared, I was hooked. For those who wanted to enter the new dialogue about intellectuals and power or political will and morality that Eastern Europe opened up around this time, *Telos* became the place to do so.

While this connection is not surprising, it is curious that *Telos* developed an overwhelming identification with Eastern Europe. Piccone assures me that, as usual memory lies, that we published less about Eastern Europe than German, French or Italian Marxism. This may be true, but an East European flavor nonetheless pervaded the journal during most of the past 10 or 15 years. Obscure language, unpronounceable names, and contorted logic to explain the persistence of an illegitimate system that was "really" there, all reinforced the shadowy influence of an East European *Telos*.

Our attraction to Eastern Europe can easily be explained by Breines' notion

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of *Telos*' dual marginality. First, in the Marxist oppositional writing that was coming out of Eastern Europe, we could take the best and ignore the worst of the Western Left tradition. We could take German philosophy without the folkish mysticism, populism without the peasants *or* the working class, and culture without national chauvinism. Of course, this selectivity was possible because we did not *live* in Eastern Europe. Beneficiaries of a liberal university education, with postgraduate degrees in "theory and practice," we inhabited the tricky zone between emancipatory politics and subversive culture. This was patently not the real Eastern Europe.

Nor was it even remotely the real US. In contrast to the homegrown Left, our East European *Telos* was secular rather than Christian and existential, attracted to aesthetics and culture long before postmodernism dragged them to the fore, concerned more with emancipation than empowerment, and determinedly textual in its dedication to theory. But Eastern Europe gave the journal a convex mirror for viewing the US, as though in these little Yaltene states that the Great Powers held in thrall we could see, however darkly, "really existing capitalism." In their lack of freedom we saw the snares and pitfalls of democratic ideology; in their noncompetitive legislatures and single parties we saw Nixon's Watergate. The unfulfilled central plans of Eastern Europe and the incomplete economic reforms that followed them refuted claims to capitalist rationality, too. In Brezhnev, and even more, in some ways, in Gorbachev, we found Reagan. And, of course, the subservience of Eastern Europe to the USSR confirmed the hegemony of both superpowers. But the normative element in our dual marginality ultimately betrayed the journal. We were all right as long as we were skeptical, as long as we continued to divorce theory as a continual inspirational idea — in the form of Marxism, or self-management, or workers' councils — from theory as an excuse for wielding power. Where the journal became occasionally divided, however, was in failing to separate practice — in the form of positions on political events in Eastern Europe — from practical positions on political events in our own capitalist societies.

The issues on which *Telos* broke most schismatically were the peace movements of the 1980s and a recent reconsideration of the "redemptive" paradigm. Significantly, both made a common ground of Western and Eastern Europe, with precedents taken equally from Napoleon to Trotsky, or Lukács to Hitler, and opposition equally posed to the nuclear policies of the USSR and the US. This even-handedness made them explosively attractive. It also threatened the post-McCarthy-era accommodation of American intellectuals with the state. For some editors, failing to condemn the Soviet Union more than the US suggested a loss of (imagined) influence. For others, it would have meant a lack of realism. For still others, however, including myself, it implied an artificial position, a subjugation to the influence of the East European *Telos*.

This *Telos* derived its intellectual agenda from the emergence of a real politics in Eastern Europe, especially Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, Solidarity

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in Poland, and some of the writing that followed the imposition of General Jaruzelski's martial law. Although the editors, like everyone else, were torn between hope and pessimism, some began to nourish notions of a new Central European democracy that could inspire the West. Their intellectual agenda departed from Marxist traditions in three unacceptable ways. First, it required giving up any vestige of a Left program, including state planning, redistribution, and socialization of new ideas; indeed, most *Telos* editors relinquished the terms Left and Right because they found them both irrelevant and distasteful. Second, it confirmed the tendency of *Telos* not to attack capital as much as the state — except for fascist regimes in which the two implicated each other. At best, writing in *Telos* tended to equate capital with the state as an overwhelming source of social terror as well as totalizing contradiction. The conjuncture, moreover, of the debates on peace movements and on "Soviet-type" societies led to the journal's most explicit normative statement to date, that if some states were bad, others that opposed them must be better. The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe thus constituted a regional system *even worse* than capitalism. If this system threatened world peace by local wars and nuclear arms, it followed that it must be opposed by equivalent means.

The development of these debates ascribed more importance to the mainly German peace movement than it deserved, and led to the third point on the agenda. The willingness to see, with some Poles, the emergence of a new form of civil society in the "self-limiting," non-hegemonic protest movements of Eastern Europe compelled some *Telos* editors to find new theoretical justification — short of contesting state power — for the most successful social movements of the last two decades in the United States. These are feminism, various civil rights movements, and gay liberation. Despite the real morality each of these movements has, the new emphasis some editors placed on civil society offered them a rapprochement with other intellectuals, hence a way out of marginality and back to Western society. They could espouse a Rainbow coalition, or liberal or social democracy, with a belief in pluralistic social movements rather than social class.

I am not calling for a return to Marx: none of us was blind to the multidimensional shaping of political reality and political consciousness. Most of the best writing in *Telos* on Eastern Europe was in fact empirical exposure of conditions in socialist societies. In contrast to much of the East European *Telos*, these articles were atheoretical. At least it would be hard to pinpoint their theoretical framework, except for a pursuit of truth and a desire to take such Marxist premises as economic, political, and social equality seriously. These were things such as my own articles on market socialism and Titoism in Yugoslavia, Zaslavsky's significant corpus on ethnic nationalism in the Soviet Union and social stratification deriving from the pre-eminence of military production, Rittersporn's historical studies of the Soviet purges of the 1930s, and Staniskis' discussion of competition in Poland between the military

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and the communist party. This work was more valuable for *not* being theoretical. The more it claimed to affirm a dynamic law — usually, the movement of socialist states toward stagnation or degeneration — the more tedious it appeared. Looking back, moreover, this work was by and large correct. Subsequent events and "revelations" only implied that *Telos* must have been read under the bedclothes by flashlight inside the Kremlin and other walls.

Our East European *Telos* also included analytic tidbits not readily found elsewhere. Pipa's equation of sex and political violence in Albania, Tismaneau's discussion of the Romanian national-ideological *portmanteau*, Stojanovic's depiction of Yugoslavia's "bashful Bolshevism," and Feher's discussion — absolutely without illusions — of the final discrediting of all the East European regimes, were significant contributions.

Perhaps our East European *Telos* was historically unique. It reflected, first, the emergence of a systemic opposition in all the East European states: schematically, technocrats in Czechoslovakia and East Germany, sociologists in Hungary and the Soviet Union, Yugoslav professors, the Polish Catholic Church — a national front displaced from 1945. Second, it reflected the expulsion or, at any rate, emigration of a large number of prolific intellectuals who had paid their Marxist dues. Some of them were taken or mistaken for Western Marxists, which was surely both accurate and absurd. Third, it was political, permitting *Telos* to pay less attention to Central Europe as the historical birthplace of aesthetic theory (as it appeared in the journal until around 1973) and more attention to contemporary Eastern Europe. This new political focus dovetailed with a climactic turning point in Eastern Europe, away from the people's insurrections of 1953 in the DDR and 1956 in Poland and Hungary, toward the moderate, pluralistic, law-seeking movements of the 1970s. Finally, the superannuation of authoritarian regimes and leaders led to a general concern with impending crisis and "what comes after." As Rittersporn drily noted, many people had come to the conclusion that even Brezhnev had to die one day, so they might well ask about the possibilities for change in the regime.

But what does that offer *Telos*? On the one hand, it is a short step from description of a really existing system to the neo-functionalism enjoying a resurgence in the desert of mainstream sociological theory. When Zaslavsky says that the Soviet Union organizes consensus out of chaos by a judicious though unjust allocation of social goods, we return to the 1950s (and earlier) functionalist explanations of social stratification. On the other hand, it is a long step from decrying irrationality, terror, and unmet claims in the system to daily expectations of imminent demise. The shaky fulcrum of ethnic compromise and materialist rewards on which Yugoslavia, for example, rests has lasted from my pessimistic analysis at Tito's death in 1980 to current demonstrations (the last straw?) in Belgrade and other cities.

For all our inside knowledge, we had no privileged view on the dialectic of structure and human action. Twenty years ago, the opening of Eastern Europe through the Korcula summer school and the rediscovery of Marx's work

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on alienation would have predicted greater philosophical breakthroughs than actually occurred. In the past, as Feher wrote, we would have had to think the most vital political loosening would come from the center, in Moscow, but that seemed least possible of all. Alternatively, the Prague Spring suggested that reform would come from within the Communist Party, yet the Polish experience with both KOR and Solidarity suggested that reform would only come from outside the party. While some people wrote in *Telos* that Polish experience since 1976 (or even 1956) made Solidarity inevitable, others were quite astounded by it. Like the positivists, the more we knew, the less we were able to predict. Or maybe our East European *Telos* developed a finer sense of irony, paradox, and futility.

It is apparent that the structural value of Eastern Europe to *Telos* (or for that matter, of *Telos* to Eastern Europe) has run out of steam. For the most part, our East European *Telos* showed it could easily be absorbed in a liberal framework. Short of becoming more like *The New Republic* than *New Left Review*, this does not suggest a viable future. With *perestroika*, moreover, there is less need for *Telos* to reveal the truth from outside. With the turnabout to market economics, there is less of anything new to say about the state. Yet if *Telos* pursues a policy of Americanization, it risks shedding a major part of its historical soul. Can the editors and those who would write for the journal apply the vocabulary of East European marginalism to really existing capitalism of the 1990s and beyond?

I suspect that a critical grammar must be applied to some of the oldest questions, beginning with the definition of rights and duties, the position of intellectuals, the question of representation, and notions of autonomy. These are the substantive topics — not a geographical focus — for which readers turned to *Telos* during its first 20 years. Continuity does not rely on finding new theoretical texts to translate, getting the latest underground demands from Armenia and Azerbaidjan, or waiting for "the other" form of society to wither away. The most fruitful strategy requires enhancing the empirical component of the journal's contents and encouraging new writers wherever they appear. Almost all journals now suffer from an overacademicization of basic concerns, a logorrhea of critique, and a problem of market differentiation. The best legacy of our East European *Telos* is not the argument against the redemptive paradigm but the model's very heart, the hankering for a substantive rationality. This hankering sets Left movements apart, gives them vitality, condemns them to both marginality and inner disruption. It is this commitment that distinguishes our East European *Telos* from the real Eastern Europe.

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Telos, *1968 And Now*

Frank Adler

May 1968 serves as a benchmark for those who would nostalgically like to identify that one moment of the 1960s which qualitatively marked a break with the past. In Europe — France and Italy, in particular — one can immediately recall the songs and slogans. Even those on the other side of the barricades have chosen to remember the most positive, emancipatory impulses of this *temps de vivre,* while regretting the disruptions and personal inconveniences. Like the Spring of 1848, the Spring of 1968 was a moment of madness; just as a conservative critic of 1848, like Tocqueville could admit in its aftermath that everyone, in spite of everything, breathed more freely because of the *folie*, so, too, few today would argue against the proposition that the eruption of 1968 on balance tended to liberate individuals, loosening superfluous and outdated social controls. In short, May 1968, this symbolic revolt against boredom, served as a mid-course cultural correction to the trajectory of postwar European development.

In America, by way of contrast, May 1968 was already the beginning of the end. To be sure, massive demonstrations against the war in Vietnam continued, as did university occupations, rock festivals and be-ins. But what characterized the "movement" henceforth would be growing factionalism, disaggregation and retreat into the personal. SDS, for all intents and purposes, was finished by the Fall, no longer the free-wheeling, open, inclusive organization born of the Port Huron Statement, but a collection of increasingly contentious, sectarian groups, each littering the official organ, *New Left Notes*, with quotes from Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Mao, Che, or some other source to establish the presumed "correctness" of its position . . . as if any of these had anything of substance to say about the economic-political-cultural constellation of advanced industrial societies in general or the US in particular. Arguably the sole strength of the American New Left, compared to that of Europe, had been the absence of Old Left baggage, particularly *ouvrieurisme*. Its target had been that peculiar all-embracing alienation generated under conditions of late capitalism which affected all classes and groups to the degree that consciousness

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itself had become homogenized. Workers *qua* workers were irrelevant or of secondary importance; few harbored any illusion that the horny-handed sons of toil had even the remotest idea of what the story was about, much less expropriate the expropriators and lead the way to human emancipation.

While the targets of resentment were clear, and prefigurative experiments were everywhere in motion, what was missing — and what led to the terminal crisis of the American New Left — was a theoretical failure of major proportions. Initially, the movement could operate within a theoretical vacuum; practical actions regarding anti-war mobilization and community organization projects could be undertaken without reference to anything more complex than old-fashioned high school civics or new-fashioned slogans of participatory democracy ("let the people decide," etc.). The critique, to the extent one existed, was parochial and largely self-referential; it focused on uniquely American conditions and the unredeemed promises of American democracy. When the time became ripe, however, for serious theoretical reflection, the cupboard was found bare: participatory democracy simply begged all the important questions; critiques of pluralism never seriously pointed the way toward a vision of presumably post-pluralist social reconstruction; most fundamentally, the interrelations between technological rationality, state intervention, patterns of cultural conformity and a new, mass organization of consensus defied either that increasingly orthodox Marxism filling the theoretical void or more mainstream academic paradigms.

There was a "new sensibility," to be sure, but only Marcuse in his most naive moments could ever believe that this pre-reflective, "instinctive" aspiration for a pacification of nature, generalized satisfaction, and social justice might constitute a "biological" basis for emancipatory socialism. One could easily be sexually liberated, socially concerned *and* stupid; in fact, that was the norm rather than the exception.

Most within SDS retreated into some unholy combination of Marxology, Marxist-Leninism, or simplistic transpositions of Third-Worldism (Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, and worse still, Regis Debray's *Revolution in the Revolution* were points of reference here). Since there was no American theory which could adequately make sense of American reality, New Left journals and anthologies almost uniformly became organs of foreign thought, which uncritically and non-selectively assumed prominence (a typical example was Carl Ogelsby's *New Left Reader* which, among other embarrassments, introduced Althusser as a leading French phenomenologist who wrote in a difficult Hegelian style; Oglesby, it should be recalled, had been a major force in SDS before it self-destructed).

Telos was launched within the context of this theoretical crisis, and also devoted itself almost exclusively to non-American theory. The founding group and those, like myself, soon attracted to it, had already taken up where Merleau-Ponty had left off; that is, attempting to recapture and then reconstitute the bases for a distinctly Western, emancipatory Marxism. Before

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English translations became available, we had already begun working our way through Marx's early manuscripts, the *Grundrisse*, Lukács and Gramsci. Since most of us were scattered at various graduate schools throughout the country and not based — like the founding group — in Buffalo, what united us initially were these core texts and theorists, and, of course, the experience of pursuing this project alone, outside and against that academic mainstream which, even when neutral or sympathetic, most often knew nothing in this area. Beyond the classic texts of Western Marxism, Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* undoubtedly compelled us to view domination in a new, far more differentiated manner than that suggested by Marx, Lukács or even Gramsci. For many of us, Marcuse was the bridge to Horkheimer and Adorno, to the dialectic of enlightenment, the culture industry, and the early project of Critical Theory which characterized the original Frankfurt School.

For Piccone, and perhaps several others of the founding group, phenomenology, or using the later Husserl to ground Western Marxism, was an overriding concern. For the others, pursuing graduate degrees in history, sociology and political science, rather than philosophy, this was at best a marginal concern and soon even Piccone dropped any immediate interest in pursuing phenomenological Marxism.

The identity *Telos* soon carved out for itself in America was highly theoretical and European, reflecting the concerns of its editors, authors and readers. It made no pretense of contributing practically to radical politics, nor to addressing distinctively American problems. What it did in its formative years it did well, mainly introducing an English-language audience to the richness of continental social thought, more often than not dealing with Western Marxism and Critical Theory at a higher level of sophistication than similar journals in France, Germany and Italy. Understandably, the more "European" the journal became, the more removed its network became from American intellectuals and the closer it drew to Europe regarding research leaves, conferences, colleagues and friends. Paradoxically, within non-moribund intellectual circles *Telos* became better known in Europe than in the US, and manuscripts increasingly arrived in foreign languages to be published originally by us.

In fact, the European identity would be highly problematic for an American-based journal whose focus slowly shifted from meta-theory, to theory, to European politics, East (really-existing socialism, Poland, Hungary, the Soviet Union) and West (Eurocommunism, Socialism in France, New Social Movements). On the one hand, the European theoretical well soon became stagnant and then ran dry; on the other, the political reportage, though interesting, soon revealed the bankruptcy of European politics. In short, by the mid-eighties it became painfully obvious that nothing much was happening on *either* side of the Atlantic. The dubious relevance of European theory and politics to an American public no longer politicized nor intellectually curious has had obvious implications for the one radical journal founded in 1968 still in existence. Rethinking the American experience and reconnecting

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with American intellectuals, but from our own distinctive location, can only be understood in this light.

Another dimension must be alluded to in discussing *Telos* and the 20th anniversary of May 1968. *Telos* was the product of a particular generation, at a particular moment in its development. All of us were graduate students whose separate research projects tended to center on issues relating to either Western Marxism or Critical Theory. It was this common interest that united and held us together, never an identifiable political stance or "*Telos* line" as such. Because this common interest presupposed a fundamental commitment to emancipation, we had little patience with crypto-authoritarian perspectives (e.g., Leninism, Maoism) or new variants of reductionist Marxism (e.g., Althusser, Poulantzas, Therborn, the trajectory of *New Left Review*). The spirit was one of relentless critique — of our theoretical heroes, as well as one another, and irreverence toward the content and especially the constipated tone of mainstream academic discourse.

Life goes on, and so it went for us. When we first began teaching, we attracted and trained students who would participate in various aspects of the journal, some going on to become editorial associates. Things began to change, however, by the late 1970s and early 1980s. Some of us — ironically, some of the very best — were screwed in tenure reviews, and others were weeded out of academia in other ways. This meant we had diminished access to bright, hard-working graduate students who might have eventually extended and enlarged the discourse we began earlier, as well as have taken their places, in turn, on the editorial board. Yet by this time there was already a marked decline of interest in the themes we had made our own, even among the editors who, having completed the graduate projects which fed into the earlier *Telos* problematic, were ready to pursue new inquiries, not necessarily related to the older concerns nor to what the others were doing. Beyond this, the exigencies of professional and family life took their toll as well.

By the mid-1980s it had become clear that *Telos* no longer had a project as such. Quality articles were published, to be sure, but any given issue henceforth would contain a rather eclectic collection of seemingly unrelated pieces. Beyond the lack of a common project, perhaps because of it, theoretical and personal differences surfaced over such issues as what had happened to Critical Theory and who was responsible for its glaciation, the political significance of feminism and new social movements, the division of labor and responsibilities among the editors. *Telos* has survived into its 20th year, but without a clear sense of purpose and direction. In all fairness, this might be too much to expect of any intellectual journal, especially one committed to a radical vision of social change, operating in a political and cultural context so vacant of ideas and passions.

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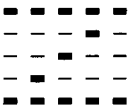

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Weber and the Myth of Calvinism

Luciano Pellicani

Many sociologists believe that much of the criticism against Weber's well-known thesis concerning the Protestant ethic "derives from a misunderstanding or an inadequate knowledge of the Weberian method."[1] It is advisable, therefore, to briefly summarize Weber's intentions in the words of one of his staunchest supporters: "Weber's problem was to understand how the capitalist entrepreneur's new mode of behavior could develop. His answer is that the ways of the capitalist entrepreneur are related to the ways which the Protestant religion, especially Calvinism, inspires man." This means that, for Weber there is a "structural homology" between the behavior of the ideal type "entrepreneur" and the Calvinist mentality, and that he interpreted such structural homology "in a causal manner." In short, Weber "described Protestantism as *one* of the causes of capitalism."[2]

The first problem here is that *all* leading medieval historians have concluded that the capitalist spirit already existed in Europe in the Low Middle Ages, well before the advent of Protestantism. After describing Godric de Finchale — an emblematic figure in that he exhibits some of the most significant features of that anthropological type, the merchant, who so disrupted feudal life in its very foundations,[3] Pirenne writes: "Godric appears to be a calculator, endowed with that commercial instinct which it is not rare to find in all ages in enterprising natures. The search for profit directs his every action and one can see

1. Alberto Martinelli, *Economia e società* (Milano: Communità, 1986), p. 34.
2. Raymond Boudon, *Metodologia della ricerca sociale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1970), pp. 90-92.
3. Godric de Finchale is so emblematic that Régine Pernoud starts her beautiful *Histoire de la bourgeoisie en France* (Paris: Seuil, 1981) with an account of his life.

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in him the famous capitalist spirit (*spiritus capitalistus*) which, it has been claimed, was initiated only with the Renaissance. It is impossible to claim that Godric practiced trade only to satisfy his daily needs. Instead of storing the money he earns in a coffer, he uses it to fuel and extend his trade. I do not believe I am being excessive, or that I am using too modern an expression, when I say that he gradually employs his earnings to increase circulating capital. It is even surprising to see how this future monk is completely devoid of religious scruples. His concern to find the market in which to make the most profit for every type of goods is in blatant contrast with the reprobation of the Church for every form of speculation, and with the economic doctrine of fair price."[4]

Mumford is even more explicitly anti-Weberian in his book on the city: "The capitalist spirit budded after the Crusades, i.e., from the 11th century . . . the passage from an economy of mutual protectionism to one of unilateral capitalist exploitation did not occur — as unfortunately Weber has led many to believe — only with the appearance of Protestantism in the 16th century. The capitalist economy had already been developing for some time when Chaucer wrote his nostalgic eulogy of *Ancient Times* in which 'there was no profit and there was no wealth.' By making a nest in which the cuckoo of capitalism could deposit its eggs, the walled city condemned its descendants to be soon deposed by this all-pervading intruder."[5] Sapori made a similar point: "The 13th century pioneers, capitalists by mentality, rationality and actual volume of business and wealth, are the forerunners of an increasingly numerous family which, assuming their spirit and perfecting their practice, will give life to an expanding system."[6]

Equally definitive is Melis' thesis which, based on a meticulous study of the Datini Archives, concludes that they "contained the essence of capitalism."[7] In short, to use Le Goff's words, "the mental attitudes created by the medieval city were essential for the birth of capitalism and the industrial revolution. With the urban measure of time, Taylorism starts to emerge; with communal urbanism, the organization of the modern city; with the urban school, the education and scientific progress of our time; with the spirit of intiative, the spirit of entrepreneurship of the contemporary age."[8] This is what historiography

4. Henri Pirenne, *La città del Medioevo*.(Bari: Laterza, 1977), pp. 80-81.
5. Lewis Mumford, *La città nella storia* (Milano: Bompiani, 1977), pp. 330-331.
6. Armando Sapori, *Studi di storia economia* (Firenze: 1967), pp. 338-339.
7. Federigo Melis, *Aspetti della vita economica medievale* (Firenze: Olschki, 1962), p. 353.
8. Jacques Le Goff, "La civiltà urbana" in Carlo M. Cipolla, ed., *Storia economica d'Europa* (Turin: UTET, 1979), vol.I, pp. 77-78. "It must be borne in mind that the

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has been saying about the capitalist spirit for decades now: it is much older than Weber believed, and it developed in an environment pervaded by Catholicism. On the other hand, had this not been the case, the following paradox would result: a capitalist economy would have existed for centuries — something which Weber himself concedes without its animating spirit.[9]

Undoubtedly, one could still argue that if the capitalist spirit preceded the Reformation, the ethics of the reformed sects legitimated and strengthened what McClelland has called the *need for achievement*,[10] and that this gave the capitalist bourgeoisie an unusually strong spiritual drive. But Weber's thesis is untenable in this form as well, not so much for the reasons given by Tawney,[11] but because one cannot imagine anything more foreign to the modern capitalist spirit than the preachings of the reformed sects, all obsessively pervaded by a horror of Mammon.[12]

Consider Luther's *To the Nobility of the German Nation*: "I know of no good customs introduced into our nation by merchants and it is for this reason that God in other times had his people of Israel reside far from the sea, not allowing them to practice merchantry. But the greatest calamity of the German land is undoubtedly lending with interest . . . . It was the devil who thought this up and the pope who acted badly in validating it throughout the world. Hence I beg and urge that each one of you should consider his own ruin, and that of his children and heirs, which is no longer shouting at his door but is inside his very house: that emperors and princes, lords and cities should ensure that

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medieval economy continues to be essentially rural, that in the cities what predominates is artisanry, that important business takes place only at a very superficial level but that, because of the volume of money involved, the extension of the geographic and economic horizons, the commercial and financial method used, the medieval merchant banker is a capitalist. And this is true because of his spirit, his life style and his position in society." See Jacques Le Goff, *Merchands et banquiers du Moyen Age* (Paris: PUF, 1986), p. 41.

9. Amintore Fanfani, *Cattolicesimo e Protestantismo nella formazione storica del capitalismo*, (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1944), pp. 167-168.

10. See David McClelland, *The Achieving Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), pp. 47-57, where he analyzes the Weberian thesis as a particular case of his general theory of motivation.

11. Richard Tawny asked: "Why insist that causation can work in only one direction? Is it not a little artificial to suggest that capitalist enterprise had to wait, as Weber appears to imply, till religious changes had produced a capitalist spirit? Would it not be equally plausible, and equally one-sided, to argue that religious changes were themselves merely the result of economic movements?" Quoted in Michael Hill, *A Sociology of Religion* (London: Heinemann, 1973), p. 99.

12. See Jean Delumeau, *Naissance et affirmation de la Réforme* (Paris: PUF, 1983).

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such usury should be from now on cursed and forbidden . . . . Much to be preferred is a single benefit, founded in a city with honest income from heredity and tax, than twenty with the income from usury . . . . In truth, lending at interest should be the indication that the world, because of its grave sins, has been sold to the devil . . . . A bit should be placed in the mouth of the Fuggers and their worthy partners."[13]

These are not the words of a man interested in opening his nation to the acquisitive spirit; they are, rather, those of a fundamentalist theologian who sees the spreading of capitalism as evidence of Christianity's surrender to Mammon, with the complicity of the Church itself. Weber himself admits that "no inner affinity with the capitalist spirit should be attributed to Luther."[14] Furthermore, he acknowledges that "the concept of *Beruf* remains linked to tradition: profession or calling is what man must accept as the divine will which he must adhere to and follow."[15] Weber, however, thinks that Luther somehow paved the way for the modern concept of calling, which was to find its main theorists in the Calvinists: calling as "professional work at the service of the community's life on earth."[16] He quotes some verses from *Paradise Lost* as a classical example of the Puritan concept of "life on earth as a task" a concept which "would have been inconceivable to a medieval writer."[17]

Milton, however, cannot be regarded as a typical representative of Puritan culture. As Samuel Johnson put it: "Of Milton we know more about what he was not, than about what he was. He was not of the Roman Church, nor was he of the Church of England."[18] He was a *sui generis* Puritan — so *sui generis* that he did not hesitate to shout before the Westminster Confession: "That I may go to hell, but a similar God will never have my respect."[19] Parrington lists him among those "original minds" who knew how to "break" with Calvinism,[20] and Léonard considers him a kindred spirit to the culture of the Restoration, which was anti-Puritan and full of Renaissance motives.[21]

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13. Martin Luther, *Scritti politici* (Turin: UTET, 1959), pp. 219-220.
14. Max Weber, *L'etica protestante e lo spirito del capitalismo*, in *Sociologia delle religioni* (Turin: UTET, 1976), vol. I, p. 169.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
18. Quoted in Giulio Giorello, "Introduzione" to John Milton, *Areopagitica* (Bari: Laterza, 1987), p. VII.
19. Quoted in Mario Miegge, *Martin Lutero* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1983), p. 100.
20. Vernon Louis Parrington, *Storia della cultura americana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1969), vol. I, p. 17.
21. Emil Léonard, *Storia del Protestantesimo* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1971), vol. II, p. 444.

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Actually, "Milton's concept of life" reiterates that what Pico della Mirandola outlined in his *Oratio de diqnitate homini* and what can be said of Giordano Bruno, whose work laid the foundations for "a social, active and lay ethic, with the help of which man builds his destiny, operating actively in the world and on the world, with skill and with industriousness."[22] Also indicative is Palmieri's *Book of Civil Life* where, in a typically bourgeois fashion, he praises commercial and industrial activities, thanks to which "life has been embellished and tidied, and cities inhabited and frequented by many men have been built."[23] In short, all of the Italian Renaissance was pervaded by the awareness that "thanks to his activities, man could accomplish anything and [that] work made of him a creator."[24] Thus Milton was only repeating what, independently of Puritanism, had already been theorized for over two centuries — on strictly lay foundations.[25]

Furthermore, Weber attributes to the Calvinist concept of calling a modernity which it never had. In his *Institutio Religionis Christianae* Calvin writes: "God commands each of us to consider his own calling in each act of his life, because He knows full well how impatient man's intellect is, how lightly he turns here and there, and that ambition and greed lead him to embrace several things at a time. Therefore, fearing that we, in our folly and audacity, might upset everything, in designing states and modes of life, God has established what each of us should do. *In order that no man should lightly transcend his limits*, He has designated as calling all manners of life."[26] What this implied, Calvin stated clearly and explicitly in his *Commentaires sur le Nouveau Tèstament*: "That each individual be content with his calling; that he follow it; that he should not desire in any way to seek another."[27]

This interpretation of calling[28] — acceptance of one's condition,

22. Antimo Negri ed., *Filosofia del lavoro* (Milan: Marzorati, 1980), vol. II, p. 255.
23. Matteo Palmieri, "Libro della vita civile," in *ibid.*, p. 234.
24. C. Wright Mills, *Colletti bianchi* (Turin: Einaudi, 1967), p. 290.
25. See Oscar Nuccio's excellent essay, "Mutazione umanistica dell' 'avaritia' da vizio teologico a virtù civile," in *Rivista di Politica Economica*, (June 1987), where it is documented that the apology of profit dates from the Low Middle Ages.
26. Giovanni Calvino, *Istituzioni della religione cristiana* (Turin: UTET, 1983), pp. 870-871.
27. Quoted in André Biéler, *La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin* (Geneva: Georg, 1961), p. 264.
28. This coincides perfectly with the Tomistic concept of calling. See H.M. Robertson, *Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1933), pp. 1-32 and Henri Hauser, *La modernité du XVI siècle* (Paris: Colin, 1963), pp. 105-133.

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condemnation of greed and ambition, compression of the temptation to exceed the given limits, condemnation of attempts to find new ways — has no affinity with an entrepreneurial mentality. If, as Sombart believed, the capitalist spirit is "the spirit of Faustus: the spirit of unrest, of anxiety,"[29] i.e., the desire to go further, to transcend one's own condition and create, almost from nothing, large enterprises in constant expansion, Weber is of the view that "the development of the (Calvinist) concept of calling soon provided the modern entrepreneur with a fabulously clear conscience."[30]

This is astonishing if one thinks that Calvin, in his last lectures on *Révélation du Prophète Ezéchiel*, attacked the acquisitive spirit. "In a well ordered republic, a man who practices usury is not in any way to be tolerated. . . . Any man who practises usury must be expelled from the company and the society of men, since, if a skill which is not in any way honest renders hateful those who practise it, there is no doubt that usury is a form of earning which is not only wicked and dishonest but also unworthy of a Christian and honest man. Anyone who regularly makes a profit from usury is a plunderer and will sink in his own iniquity. We should always remember that it is difficult for he who makes a profit not to act against his brother; for this reason, it is desirable that the words usury, profit and interest be completely banished from the memory of men."[31]

Convinced of these ideas and, above all, in the absolute certainty of being the only authorized interpreter of the Holy Scriptures, Calvin transformed Geneva in a city reminiscent of Plato's Republic: a closed self-absorbed society, intolerant of anything that did not conform with the ethical principles of religious orthodoxy; a society consistently hostile to change, to the growth of wealth, to individualism, to everything which, in short, characterizes bourgeois civilization. Weber himself was also aware of this. "The control of the ecclesiastic police over life which, in the territories of the Calvinist State Churches, was pushed almost to the degree of the inquisition, was able to contrast the development of individual strengths in the concrete effort to methodically gain salvation and, in certain circumstances, it actually succeeded."[32]

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29. Werner Sombart, *Il capitalismo moderno* (Turin: UTET, 1967), p. 173.
30. Max Weber, *General Economic History* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1981), p. 367.
31. Quoted in André Biéler, *La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin*, *op. cit.* p. 466 and p. 469.
32. Max Weber, *L'etica protestante e lo spirito del capitalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

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How, in spite of its radical anti-Mammonism and its inquisitional spirit, was the Calvinist reading of the Christian message functional to the "quantitative formation" and "qualitative expansion"[33] of the modern entrepreneurial bourgeoisie? In answer to this question, frequently asked by critics of the Weberian thesis, Nelson stated that Calvin accomplished nothing less than "a revolutionary transmutation of values," in that "by demolishing the deuteronomic exegesis inherited from the past . . . he broke away from medieval morality . . . and opened the way towards the world of universal otherness, where all become brothers in that they are equally others."[34] His entire argument is based on Calvin's 1545 letter to Claude de Sachins: "In the Scriptures there is no passage which demonstrates that any type of usury is to be absolutely condemned." He continues: "it would be desirable that usury were banished from the whole world and that the very word had never been heard of: but since this is impossible, one must consent to common utility . . . one could say that today usury is still illegal for us, for the same reasons that it was forbidden to the Jews. To this I would answer that there are differences in political relations, since the situation of the place in which God had placed the Jews, and many other circumstances as well, meant that they were easily able to trade among themselves without the need of usury. Our situation has no resemblance to that situation. Therefore, I do not see that usury should be absolutely forbidden unless in the sense that it is contrary to equity and charity."[35]

With this, Calvin did provide a partial justification for usury. But it should not be exaggerated. Here one should look at the facts, which tell us that "in the field of usury, Calvin opened no door: these doors had already been opened for some time."[36] Suffice it to recall that, as far back as 1369 a law had been passed in Genoa establishing: "Against those who claim that contracts of exchange and insurance are illegal and constitute usury according to the Scriptures, and have recourse to the ecclesiastic courts in order to obtain judgments, since if such contracts were not observed the citizens and the merchants of Genoa would undergo serious damage. . . . Anyone who invokes such an

33. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
34. Benjamin Nelson, *Usura e cristianesimo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1967), pp. 108-109.
35. Giovanni Calvino, "Lettera a Sachins," in Giuliano Gigliozzi, ed., *Le teorie della proprietà da Lutero a Babeuf* (Turin: Loescher, 1978), pp. 56-57.
36. Fernand Braudel, *Civiltà materiale, economica e capitalismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1977), vol. II, p. 575.

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exception be condemned by law to pay half a lira for each lira which he has refused to pay."[37] Less than 20 years later, Bishop Ademaro Fabbri acknowledged that it was impossible to subject the conduct of Genoa businessmen to the ecclesiastic notion of economics and gave the city "unlimited freedom to exercise usury."[38] — a freedom which already existed, and had always existed — in the Republic of Venice, where the bourgeoisie, in whose hands lay the control of all the levers of the State, had never tolerated any interference on the part of the Church in its economic life;[39] a freedom which, at the beginning of the 15th century, was so well established in the cities of North-Central Italy, which carried out commerce and manufacture, that it was not rare to find preachers and theologians even singing its praises. The most famous of these was undoubtedly Saint Bernard of Siena who, in 1425, had no scruples at all in urging his faithful to practice trade and have their money yield in the most rational and liberal manner. "If you exercise trade and industry," he expounds in one of his sermons, "God will protect you from wars, the plague, hunger, hungry wolves, i.e., from the power of the tyrants, of the lords, and from every evil."[40]

Even if one accepts the written word, the Calvinist doctrine of usury does not constitute a turning point, as Nelson claimed. It is enough to recall that Luther's main antagonist, the theologian Johann Eck, during the famous Bologna debate of July 12, 1515 (30 years before Sachins' letter), recognized the legitimacy of usury.[41] Apart from fixing an interest rate not higher than 5% through a special decree,[42] Calvin did not see fit to publish the letter, nor did he publicly rectify his total condemnation of professional money lenders. To quote Robert Fenton, the author of a 1612 treatise on usury, "Calvin treated usury in the same way as a pharmacist treats poison."[43] Nor could it have been

37. Quoted in Roberto S. Lopez, *La nascita dell'Europa* (Turin: Einaudi, 1984), p. 299.
38. Delumeau, *Naissance et affirmation de la Réforme*, *op. cit.*, p. 309.
39. "Venice," McClelland has remarked, "never permitted her religious scruples to interfere with what she considered her material welfare. Her people, as individuals, were good Catholics, but the Republic as a state cared for her own interest first . . . She never willingly tolerated the interference of the Church in temporal matters; and was always ready to take extreme measures in maintaining this position." Quoted in Oliver C. Cox, *The Foundations of Capitalism* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), pp. 58-59.
40. Quoted in Christian Berc, *Le siècle des Médicis* (Paris: PUF, 1977), p. 15.
41. See H. A. Oberman, *I maestri della Riforma* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982), pp. 195-196.
42. This was a paltry rate, since cost of money in the XVI century was about 30%.
43. Quoted in Richard H. Tawney, *La religione e la genesi del capitalismo* (Turin: UTET, 1975), p. 362.

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otherwise, since his entire outlook was dominated by the typically medieval idea that economic life had to be subject to the ethical imperatives of the Holy Scriptures and that, therefore, the claim of entrepreneurs to operate solely on the basis of the (amoral) laws of the market had to be curbed.

Weber, however, while recognizing that "Calvin did not like bourgeois wealth,"[44] believed it possible to assert that "in northern Europe the prohibition against usury was broken up by Protestantism, although not immediately."[45] Troeltsch's interpretation of Calvin's thought is correct: whereas 16th century Calvinism was decidedly hostile to capitalism, neo-Calvinism "was the real generator and propeller of the bourgeois and industrial capitalism of the middle classes."[46] In this context, however, Weber warns that "the effects of the Reformation on civilization were largely (rather, from our special point of view, for the most part) the unforeseen or even undesired consequences of the work of the reformers, which frequently were divergent from, or even opposite to, all that they had dreamed in their ideals."[47]

In order to show the psychological processes involved in Calvinism's change of direction, Weber focussed his analysis on the concept of predestination. According to this doctrine, from the moment an individual comes into the world his destiny is marked by a *decretum horribile*. The logical consequence of this should have been fatalism or, at most, amoralism. But the wish for salvation drove the Calvinists to seek signs of their having been chosen by God, throwing themselves into the world, and operating in that world with methodical asceticism

44. Max Weber, *L'etica protestante*, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

45. Max Weber, *General Economic History*, *op. cit.*, p. 271. Weber cited Claude Somaise's *De Usuris* to confirm his thesis. He, however, omits to inform his readers that Somaise's ideas on usury met strong opposition by the Calvinist clergy and that it was necessary for civil authorities to intervene in 1568 to establish that "in fact no banker could be excluded from communion simply for the fact that he practised usury." Cf. Henri Kamn, *Il secolo di ferro* (Bari: Laterza, 1985), p.112. Naturally, since the whole of Dutch society in the XVII century had taken on a marked capitalist bourgeois character, some Calvinist theologians felt the need to consider the possibility that the figure of the "Christian merchant" may not have been a contradiction in terms. For example, Godfried Hudemans published an essay with the significant title, *The Spiritual Rudder of Commerce*: "Superficially, the book seems to have been written to confirm Weber's thesis . . . . But its definition of correct commercial practice was so circumscribed by prohibitions and traditional scruples that, in effect, it was no more permissive than the classical texts — Cicero, Seneca, the Stoics, which the author cites as freely as the Holy Scriptures." Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* (London: Collins, 1987), p. 330.

46. Ernst Troeltsch, *Il Protestantismo nella formazione del mondo moderno* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1974), p. 70.

47. Max Weber, *L'etica protestante*, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

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in order to conquer the *certitudo salutis*. "Just as good works were unsuitable as means for attaining salvation, they were also indispensible as a sign of election." Thus an increase in wealth through tireless professional labor becomes the evident sign of God's blessing: God had his good reasons for rewarding one of his creatures and for destining others to poverty. Consequence: the doctrine of predestination "freed the acquisition of goods from the obstacles of traditional ethics in its psychological effects and broke the constraints to the drive to wealth, insofar as it not only legalized the acquisitive spirit but even considered it as willed by God."[48] The historical result of all this was "the formation of capital by means of an ascetic obligation to save,"[49] lived as a calling.

It is undoubtedly an interesting argument. A careful examination of the texts, however, forces one to conclude that Weber formulated an "ideal type" which had nothing to do with historic reality. The Calvinist seeking the *certitudo salutis* in business is a pure mental construct. History has shown that the Calvinist never thought that capitalist profit was "one of the most important foundations, which allowed one to know that he was the object of God's blessing,"[50] and if he did happen to think that this was the case, this was against what the preachers of the Reformation had (tirelessly and obsessively) been repeating, i.e., that the desire for wealth and the search for profit removed man from salvation.

This is the conclusion reached by Charles and Katherine George, after a careful reading of Puritan documents, prior to the 1642 revolution. "Recognizing the significance in Protestant social theory of the doctrine of calling, Weber has assigned to it the principal role in establishing a mutually sustaining connection between the Protestant ethos and the spirit of capitalism. Though our findings certainly coincide with the Weberian hypothesis in its emphasis on the importance of the doctrine of the calling, they do not support any interpretation of this doctrine as capitalist in nature or direction. Weber himself defines the spirit of capitalism as consisting essentially in the rational pursuit of profit. What is farthest from the English Protestant doctrine of the calling, what is specifically contrary to it, in fact, is this very rational pursuit of profit. The Christian pursues nothing in the calling except, through the proper performance of the duty it involves, the service of God and

48. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 309.
50. Max Weber, *Economia e società* (Milano: Comunità, 1968), vol. II, p. 518.

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his fellow man. Even the Christian's simple maintenance (which surely is to be socially and economically distinguished from profit, that excess of reward beyond the maintenance or immediate expense), even the Christian's simple maintenance is to be seen as an incidental consequence of diligence in the calling rather than as an object of endeavour. Profit entails enriching, furthermore, an increase of wealth in the hands of the person undertaking the profitable enterprise. The English Protestant divine attacks from many angles any orientation of life toward the increase of wealth. Through exhortation to constancy in the calling and other related arguments, he encourages and sponsors, just as does his Roman Catholic forebearer, a stable rather than mobile society."[51]

Nor does the Puritan literature of the second half of the 17th century look any different, with the possible exception of Richard Steele's unrepresentative work, *The Tradesman's Calling*. Consider John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, a 1678 book which had an enormous influence — Coleridge judged it "second only to the Bible" and Weber considered it one of the most representative books of all of Puritan literature. Its central theme is the typical Christian disparaging of "temporal matters which distract one from eternal matters."[52] "Thou must prefer the cross before the treasures of Egypt,"[53] warns Bunyan, and thou must be conscious that "Mr. Worldly Wiseman is an alien and Mr. Legality is a cheat"; that "his son Civility, notwithstanding his simpering looks, is but a hypocrite and cannot help thee."[54] "Passion of the men of this world, and Patience of the men of that which is to come: for as here thou seest, Passion will have all now, this year, that is to say, in this world; so are the men of this world: they must have all their good things now; they cannot stay till the next year, that is until the next world."[55]

Given these premises, Bunyan urges his readers not to allow themselves to be captured by the desire for wealth, since it inevitably leads to the death of the soul or, at least, to its corruption. "Now at the farther side of that plain there was a little hill, called Lucre, and in that hill

51. Charles and Katherine George, "Protestantism and Capitalism in Pre-Revolutionary England," in S.N. Eisenstadt, ed., *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), pp. 173-174. But John McNeill, in *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), had already shown the anti-capitalist character of the English Puritans' preachings.
52. John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1799), p. 39.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 29
55. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

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a silver mine, which some of them that had formerly gone that way, because of the rarity of it, had turned aside to see; but, going too near the brim of the pit, the ground, being deceitful, under them broke, and they were slain; some also had been maimed there, and could not, to their dying day, be their own men again."[56] For what concerns the signs of divine grace, Bunyan, like all Puritan preachers, was not even touched by the idea that these could be found in professional success or in the accumulation of temporal goods. "A work of grace in the soul," he writes, "discovers itself either to him that hath it, or to standersby. To him that hath it . . . . it gives him conviction of sin, especially the defilement of his nature, for the sake of which he is sure to be damned, if he findeth not mercy at God's hand by faith in Jesus Christ. This sight and sense of things worketh in him sorrow and shame for sin."[57]

Such ideas could never have generated "that freeing of the pursuit of profit"[58] Weber discusses. Historical evidence confirms that orthodox Calvinism did not recruit its followers from the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, nor did it convert them into critical accumulators of capital. Quite the opposite.[59] "In France as in Holland and later in England and New England, Calvinist leadership was recruited from the small, socially influential but poor and frequently discontent nobility — 'the gentlemen farmers,' as Trevelyan refers to them — similar to Cromwell. Unlike knights, they were not profoundly attached to the land, and considered their property only for its value on the monetary market, not considering it in any way a home for the heart, or for the rest of the spirit; for they considered themselves passing guests on the earth, and lived in Menshek, which for them meant an extension of Keda, which meant obscurity."[60] Such gentlemen farmers "did not generally have a bourgeois-type *forma mentis*,"[61] and the world of market economy was completely foreign to them. After being "manipulated" by the passionate preachings of the reformers, their anti-economic prejudices increased.

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56. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
58. Max Weber, *L'etica Protestante*, *op. cit.*, p. 309.
59. Bunyan's public was not constituted by businessmen seeking *certitudo salutis*, but by the poorest classes of English society. With his work, "he shaped English popular culture in a lasting fashion and . . . helped the poor and the miserable to understand that salvation, election and grace were not the privilege of the wealthy." See Armand Himy, *Le puritanisme* (Paris: PUF, 1987), p. 80.
60. C.H. Wilson, "Commercio, società, Stato," in *Storia economica Cambridge* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), vol. IV, p. 565.
61. Kamen, *Il secolo di ferro*, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

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"I detest vile earnings and petty savings," wrote (in 1647) John Oglander, a typical representative of the gentry, reiterating what had always been the most constant *leitmotif* of Puritan literature.[62]

As concerns what could be called the shock troops of the international Calvinist movement, they were recruited from the *menu peuple*, mainly in France. Recent studies have shown that the reformers' preaching found fertile soil in those areas in which textile workers and artisans had been harshly affected by the price revolution[63] and therefore were particularly prone to adhere to a movement which directly challenged capitalism and the unfair concentration of wealth in the hands of the plutocratic bourgeoisie. This confirms Henri Hauser's thesis according to which "the 16th century Reformation was of a dual nature: it was both a social and a religious revolution. It was not only against the corruption of dogma and the abuses of the clergy that the popular classes joined in an uprising; it was also against poverty and injustice. What they sought in the Bible was not only the doctrine of salvation through grace but also the proof of the original equality of men."[64]

If Luther's and Calvin's challenge succeeded in producing one of the great schisms of Western history, this was also mainly due to international commercial capitalism, which had generated a vast "internal proletariat" composed of all those social groups — gentlemen farmers, intellectuals, artisans, manual workers, farmers, etc. — who had been drawn out of their ancestral communities. It was these groups, and not the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, comfortably housed in the feudal bourgeois order, that gave the Reformation its specific character of social protest. The Scottish case is a clear example of the total estrangement of the Reformation from the world of the market economy. Between the 16th and the 17th centuries, Scotland was a Calvinist society *par excellence*. John Knox, who, during his stay in Geneva, had become friendly with Calvin, succeeded in modeling the Scottish church on the Geneva model and extending its spiritual domination over all of society.

If Weber's account were valid, Scotland should have been a country

62. Richard Cartwright, the most famous Puritan leader of the Elizabethan times, used to say that "usury is a hateful offence to God and his Church." Quoted in Richard Tawney, *La religione e la genesi del capitalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 479. "Honors and wealth are only secondary matters," warned William Perkins, who professed the same faith as Cartwright. "Those who make use of their life and calling to obtain honors, pleasures, profits and wordly comfort will profanate them." *Op. cit.*, p. 167.

63. Perez Zagorin, *Rebels and Rulers* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univerity Press, 1982), pp. 153-155 and Menna Prestwich, "Calvinism in France," in Menna Prestwich, ed., *International Calvinism* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1986), pp. 81-82.

64. Quoted in Delumeau, *Naissance et affirmation de la Réformé*, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

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in rapid economic expansion, with an avant-garde entrepreneurial class composed of ascetic accumulators of capital. During the entire period in which Calvinist bibliocracy reigned unchallenged, this certainly was not the case. On the contrary: "foreign travellers, even when predisposed to a favorable view of the country, continually remarked about the sharp contrast between the economic amenities and the subsistence level of this small northern kingdom, and those of regions with which they were more familiar. Exaggerated and biased as some of these accounts were, they were corroborated almost without exception by Scottish writers, who simply accepted the fact that theirs was a poorer country than most others in Western Europe."[65]

Nor can it be said that Scotland was in a phase of capital accumulation. Its economy was mainly rural, and technology was extremely primitive. Moreover, during all of the 17th century, Scotland "remained untouched by the economic ferment that had begun to transform the English countryside as far back as the 15th century. Enclosures, to the surprise of more than one English visitor, were almost completely unknown before 1700; and the whole aspect of rural life was one which left southern observers with the impression that here was a people generally affected with sloth and a lazy vagrance."[66] As concerns the commercial class, it was extremely small, and the capital it managed modest; moreover, and this is significant, its sympathies lay with the court party (Anglican) and not with the country party (Puritan).

This does not prevent Marshall from calmly stating that "exactly what Weber had forecast" took place in 16th and 17th century Scotland.[67] It never occurs to him that the Calvinist spiritual hegemony, with its obsessive hostility towards anything to do with lucre or profit, had in effect slowed down the formation of a modern entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. Yet a comparison with the English case should have indicated to him that perhaps there was some relation between English economic development after 1660 and the defeat of the Puritan party.

Still more surprising is Jonassen's view that a confirmation of the Weberian thesis can be seen in the Norwegian bourgeoisie's conversion to Lutheranism.[68] The fact that Weber himself had explicitly excluded any "intimate affinity" between Luther's preaching and the spirit

65. S. N. Burnell, "Calvinism, Capitalism and Middle Classes," in S.N. Eisenstadt ed., *Modernization*, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

67. Gordon Marshall, *Presbyteries and Profit*, (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1980), P. 276.

68. Christian T. Jonassen, "Protestantisme et capitalisme en Norvège," in Philippe Besnard, ed., *Protestantisme et capitalisme* (Paris: Colin, 1970), p. 283.

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of capitalism escapes Jonassen. The Norwegian case, therefore, proves nothing except that *The Protestant Ethic* continues to fascinate sociologists in a way that prevents them from seeing the facts, especially if one bears in mind that the vast majority of historians have concluded that there is no positive correlation between the Reformation and the development of capitalism.

It may be argued that the spectacular economic growth of Holland, the real prototype of 17th century capitalism, coincided with Holland's conversion to Calvinism. This would apparently prove Weber right. But a close analysis of the Dutch case, and of the economy of the United Provinces, reveals an exceptional situation.[69] First of all, to define Holland as a Calvinist country is no small exaggeration. Indeed, the Republic of the Seven Provinces was from the very beginning characterized by its extraordinary religious pluralism. Although the Calvinists were the largest religious group, they were never more than a third of the population. The Catholics were very numerous and, according to what the Landsadvocaat Johan van Oldenbarneveldt confided in 1617 to the English diplomat Dudley Carleton, they represented "*la plus saine et plus riche partie*,"[70] as it was logical to assume, since most of the Flemish bourgeoisie which, remaining bound to the fathers' faith, had sought refuge with their capital from the Spanish Inquisition in the northern part of the Netherlands.

A Calvinist bourgeoisie did exist but, unfortunately for the Weberian thesis, it "sided for the most part with the Arminians," who strongly rejected the doctrine of predestination and generally left themselves open "to the accusation of religious indifference"[71] from the Gomarists, who aspired to organize Dutch society according to the

69. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, *op. cit.*

70. Alastair Duke, "The Ambivalent Faces of Calvinism in the Netherlands," in Menna Prestwich ed., *International Calvinism*, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

71. Léonard, *Storia del Protestantesimo*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 397. Weber, however, believes the fact that "precisely the important financiers in Holland, for example, were not on the whole followers of strict Calvinism, but were Arminians" did not constitute a confutation of his theory since "the small and medium bourgeoisie who raised themselves to the class of entrepreneurship were, as elsewhere, typical representatives of the capitalist ethos and the Calvinist religion" (*L'etica protestante*, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144). But, historically, things went very differently from the way in which Weber presents them. "Calvinism, in Holland at least, was no producer of capitalism. The Dutch capitalists had a national church which was far less effective in frustrating their attempts to establish a capitalist society than the inquisitorial Roman Catholics. But ever since its reactionary victory over the liberal Calvinists or Arminians in 1619, it constantly stood in opposition to capitalist principles of social organization." Oliver C. Cox, *The Foundations of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

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theocratic principles in force in the extremely Calvinistic Geneva. "Far from being disposed to stimulating capitalism," Gomarists "maintained a restrictive and economically outdated attitude. Voetius, the fierce deacon of the Calvinist theologians from Utrecht, spent his entire life conducting a campaign against luxury, usury and all forms of dissipation; he excommunicated a pious woman for the simple fact that her husband worked in a pawn shop, and in many other parishes he encouraged a similar aversion to any activity that was liable to be suspected of usury and profit."[72]

In 1619 the Gomarists held a synod in Dordrecht in which representatives of the Calvinist churches throughout Europe participated. The synod condemned the doctrine of Arminius as being impious and drew up a set of articles of orthodox faith in which the idea of predestination was given a central position. However, in spite of the support of the nobility and of the rural and working masses, this theocratic dream was never realized. "Calvinism, purged of the Arminian heresy, remained the Church of State, but not however, the Church of the State"[73] and "the spiritual life of the age, seen as a whole, was founded only to a minor degree on the doctrine prescribed at Dordrecht."[74] The other religious confessions were too strong and numerous to allow the Gomarists to impose their ideological dictatorship. Above all, the role of the entrepreunerial bourgeoisie, which had no intention of seeing Calvinist bigotry substitute Catholic bigotry, was too important.

Thus it was the spirit of Erasmus, not of Calvin, which in the end set the tone of economic and cultural life in Dutch society, which became the most capitalist nation of Europe. And it succeeded in this precisely in that it institutionalized the typically bourgeois separation between business and religion:[75] a separation which, to the custodians of Calvinist orthodoxy, seemed blasphemous, but against which they could do nothing.

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72. Charles Wilson, *La Reoubblica olandese* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1968), p. 49. Voetius' anti-capitalism was incorporated in the orthodoxy of the Dutch Calvinist church, whose ministers excluded from communion all those who practised usury. But the national synod of Middelburg, which took place in 1581, had already forbidden bankers from participation in Holy Communion.

73. Johan Huizinga, *La civiltà olandese del Seicento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), pp. 54-55.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

75. This did not escape the attention of a careful observer of Dutch society, William Temple, who wrote in 1673: "It may be that in other nations religion does a greater good, but here it is certain that it does a lesser evil." Quoted in Pierre Jeannin, *L'Europe du Nord-Ouest et du Nord* (Paris: PUF, 1987), p. 111.

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In view of this, can one blame those who claim that Weber's thesis is a real distortion of historical reality?[76] Calvinism not only had no positive function in the development of the entrepreneurial spirit but, along with its "twin rival," counter-reformation Catholicism, it represented the strongest attempt at halting Europe's advance towards a modern, capitalist, bourgeois civilization.[77] If it did not succeed, it was because, with the only exception of Geneva and Scotland, it did not have at its disposal an adequate coercive apparatus.

The case of the North American colonies confirms this point. A series of historical facts, which Weber did not take into account, contradict the myth of an America that is capitalist because Puritan.[78] In the first wave of immigration (1606-1637), those who went to the New World were individuals who had decided to migrate "in order to institute religious freedom for themselves, and not to implant the ideal of tolerance for all cults."[79] Hebrew theology and Calvinist discipline conspired to inspire in these first migrants the desire to found a theocratic state in which there would be no room for religious or economic freedom, both of which had always been strongly condemned by Calvinism. John Winthrop, the founder and first Governor of Boston, stated

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76. See in particular the devastating criticism of H.R. Robertson, *Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism*, *op. cit.*, and Kurt Samuelsson, *Economia e religione*, (Roma: Armando, 1974).

77. In the 17th century, both England and Scotland looked to Holland as a model to imitate. In the first half of the century, the Puritans (English and Scottish) had only words of admiration for "the venerable synod of Dordrecht." Even the Westminster Confession accepted the dogmas of the Gomarist church, and first and foremost that of predestination. But once the Puritan party had been removed from power, another Holland became the model of the English: the Erasmian, tolerant, bourgeois Holland. In fact, "they were the first to follow the Dutch in the process of rationalization and reform of agriculture. They did so by using Dutch methods, and with the help of Dutch engineers and Dutch capital." (Wilson, *La Repubblica olandese*, *op. cit.*, p. 89). They also adopted the Dutch banking system and, after the Glorious Revolution, the principle of a rigorous separation between business and religion. The Scots, on the other hand, continued to imitate the bigoted and anti-capitalist Calvinist Holland. Thus, whereas England started along the road which was to lead her to become the main capitalist power in the world, Scotland remained immersed in the stagnant waters of Calvinist orthodoxy and underdevelopment.

78. "Because they (the Puritans) have too often been seen as the pioneers not only of New England but also of the American way of life, that blueprint has persistently been misrepresented. It was not, for instance, a design for democracy, liberty or capitalism." W. Speck and L. Billington, "Calvinism in Colonial North-America," in Menna Prestwich ed., *International Calvinism*, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

79. Charles, Mary and William Beard, *Storia degli Stati Uniti* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1963), p. 35.

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firmly: "If we change the community into a democracy, in the first place we will no longer have the authority of the Scriptures, for there was no such government in Israel and, second, we will lower ourselves and deprive ourselves of that dignity placed within us by Providence, since democracy among civilized nations is considered the lowest and the worst of all forms of government."[80] And John Cotton, "the defender of orthodoxy,"[81] in reacting to a pamphlet defending freedom of conscience, warned that he who persists in error, although warned on several occasions, "is not out of conscience but against conscience, as the Apostle saith. He is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself, that is of his conscience. So that in such a man, after such admonition shall still persist in the error of his way, and be therefore punished, he is not persecuted for cause of conscience, but for sinning against his own conscience."[82]

Consequently, wherever orthodox Puritans took power, the state was transformed into "a police ministry of the church,"[83] whose institutional task was to constantly watch over all social practices, including economic ones, which had to conform with the biblical ideal of austerity. In particular in New England, "with the proclamation of the Declaration of Cambridge by the 1646-47 synod, and with the acceptance of the professional faith of Westminster, the creation of the organism and credo of an authoritarian church-state was brought to completion"[84] with the aim of ensuring the "enforcement of orthodoxy and the preservation of religious uniformity."[85]

On the subject of the economy, the main guideline of New England's

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80. Quoted from André Maurois, *Histoire des Etats-Unis* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1943), p. 42. John Winthrop used to add, "The best part is always the least, and of that best part the wiser part is always the lesser." Quoted from Woodrow Wilson, *A History of the American People* (New York: Harper, 1902), vol. I, p. 121.

81. John Spencer Basset, *A Short History of the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), vol. I, p. 66.

82. Quoted from J.B. Boorstein, *The Colonial Experience* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), p. 9.

83. Raimondo Luraghi, *Gli Stati Uniti* (Turin: UTET, 1974), p. 90.

84. Vernon Louis Parrington, *Storia della cultura americana*, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 32. The Cambridge Declaration stated: "Idolatry, blasphemy, heresy, verting corrupt and pernicious opinions that destroy the foundation, open contempt of the word preached, profanation of the Lord's day, disturbing the peaceable administration and exercise of the worship and holy things of God, and the like, are to be restrained and punished by civil authority." Quoted from J.G. Palfrey, *History of New England* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), vol. II, p. 185.

85. E. S. Gaustad, *A Religious History of America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 55.

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"adamantine puritans" was William Ames' *De Conscientia* where, among other things, he warned that "to wish to buy cheap and sell dear is common (as St. Augustin observes) but is is a common vice:"[86] a vice which the guardians of orthodoxy believed to be the most dangerous imaginable, since it weakened solidarity among the faithful and opened the doors to the perverse temptations of Mammon. In effect, they never ceased to "uphold the virtues of rural life and criticize the growth of commerce."[87] Naturally, they also condemned usury. Around 1640, a Massachusetts priest drew the attention of his faithful to the renewed outbreak of Old Adam — "profit and not the propagation of religion being the main aim" —while the Governor, William Bradford, after remarking bitterly that many had increased "their external goods to excess," forecast that the increase of material prosperity would mean "the ruination of New England or at least of God's Church therein."

In order to halt the drive to profit "the authorities regulated prices, limited interest rates, introduced a ceiling on salaries and had incorrigible idlers whipped. These were all practices which existed even in the land of slavery from which they had escaped; what distinguished the sons of light more than anything was the attempt to apply this same integral discipline to the volatile sector of commercial and industrial profit. The Massachusetts authorities established the price of cattle not on the basis of the purchaser's needs, but on the basis of what was considered a reasonable, and therefore not excessive, profit for the seller. Their anger *vis-à-vis* those who demanded a higher price was the same as Moses' when he came down from the mountain and found the Chosen People adoring the Golden Calf."[88]

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86. Quoted from Jeannette Tawney, "Introduction" to Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory* (London: Bell and Sons, 1925), p. XI.

87. W.A. Speck and L. Billington, *Calvinism in Colonial North America*, *op. cit.*, p. 268. In reality, the "pilgrim fathers" did something more: in accordance with the teachings of Calvinist theologians, they created a Spartan-like communist regime, based on the division of land in undividable plots and the equal distribution of the goods produced. Very soon, however, this "sacred experiment" was abandoned for the following reasons, which William Bradford himself confessed bitterly: "The experience that was had in this common course and condition, tried sundrie years, and that amongst godly and sober men, may well evice the vanitie of that concete of Plato's and other ancients, applauded by some of later times; that the taking away of propertie, and bringing in community into a commonwealth, would make them happy and flourishing. . . . For this communitie . . . was found to breed much confusion and discontent, and retard much imployment that would have been to their benefite and comfort."

88. Tawney, *La religione e la genesi del capitalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

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Thus when Perry Miller writes that in American Puritanism "there were some dogmas which proved to be an obstacle rather than a help to bourgeois economy," he is correct. However, immediately after he adds, without providing any evidence, that the Weberian interpretation of Puritan piety is "an attempt to give a rational basis to economic development . . . not without foundation."[89] Suffice it to refer to the Keayne affair to realize to what extent it is contrary to the evidence of facts to see any positive link between Puritan ethics and the prodigious development of American capitalism.

Robert Keayne, a Boston tradesman, had by common consent committed a very serious transgression: he had sold his goods without respecting the law of fair prices; yet he claimed to be a good Puritan who had come to the New World to spread the Gospel. Although a great scandal broke out in 1639, the ministers of the cult treated Keayne relatively briefly: they only fined him and warned him against the inadmissible sin of selling according to the laws of the market place. But Keayne, instead of admitting that his heart was "greedy and corrupt," defended the reasons of the profession he practised and even claimed that only by behaving as he had done was a merchant able to avoid bankruptcy. There was great demand that he be excommunicated and John Cotton announced that he would denounce the "false principles of Keayne" in a public ceremony. Such "false principles" were as follows: 1) "It is possible to sell at the highest possible price and buy at the cheapest. 2) In the event of loss of goods due to shipwreck, etc., the price of the other goods may be increased. 3) Sales can be made at the purchasing price even if the price paid was too high and the goods have decreased in value. 4) Just as one takes advantage of one's own capacities and skills, so also can one take advantage of the ignorance and need of others. 5) In the event that time for payment is granted,

89. Perry Miller, *Lo spirito della Nuova Inghilterra*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1962), p. 60. However, Miller in his introduction to an anthology he edited in conjunction with Thomas Johnson, has changed his mind concerning Puritanism. He writes: "A few decades ago it had become very much the thing to praise the Puritans for virtues which they did not possess and which they would not have considered virtues at all. In the pages of liberal historians and above all in the speeches of Fourth of July orators, the Puritans have been hymned as the pioneers of religious liberty, though nothing was ever farther from their designs; they have been hailed as the forerunners of democracy, though if they were, it was quite beside their intention; they have been invoked in justification for an economic philosophy of free competition and laissez-faire, though they themselves believed in government regulation of business, the fixing of just prices, and the curtailing of individual profits in the interests of the welfare of the whole." *The Puritans* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 4-5.

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compensation can be claimed for this also."[90]

These restrictions, with the support of the civil authorities which in the early decades was never lacking, might have succeeded in keeping capitalism and its spirit away from the Anglo-American colonies. But the special political and environmental conditions prevented this from happening. The London Government took no interest in the colonies, and the latter, as soon as they felt oppressed by the bigotry and anti-Mammonism of their Puritan ministers, were able to move "the frontier" of civilization. This explains why, despite the many curbs created by the guardians of Calvinistic orthodoxy, commercial activity was able to develop rapidly parallel to the proliferation of the colonies.

Lord Baltimore, who had been expelled from Virginia because he had converted to Catholicism, founded the colony of Maryland and in 1649 his son, Cecilius Calvert, successfully obtained approval of an act of tolerance. In 1639, Thomas Hooker, who rejected Winthrop's and Cotton's theocratic ideas, founded the colony of Connecticut, "whose fundamental laws constituted the first written constitution of modern democracy."[91] Roger Williams, a Puritan imbibed with Lutheran ideas and therefore prone to recognizing freedom of conscience was forced to abandon New England in 1644. He founded the colony of Rhode Island. Finally, William Penn, an admirer of John Locke, transformed Pennsylvania into the most prosperous of all the colonies, thanks to his liberal legislation.[92]

The result was that Puritan orthodoxy was not able to control the economic life of the immigrants and that, thanks to what Burke was to define as "the healthy abandonment"[93] by the London Government, at the end of the 17th century, the North American colonies became virtually independent. Thus, by exploiting to the utmost "a freedom

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90. Quoted from Tawney, *La religione e la genesi del capitalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 375. In light of these principles, one fails to understand on the basis of which privileged source of information S.E. Morison and H.S. Commager were able to state that New England Protestant theologians "preached that a good trader, providing he was honest, served God just as well as a priest." *Storia degli Stati Uniti d'America* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1961), vol. I, p. 74.

91. Maurois, *Histoire des Etats-Unis*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

92. "Intolerance and trade do not agree," the Dutch used to say. They provided a practical demonstration of the validity of this theorem with the colonies of New York and New Jersey, where "capitalism prospered in an extraordinary fashion without too many ideological concerns, but based on a more banal but positive practicality." See Luraghi, *Gli Stati Uniti*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

93. Quoted from Morison and Commanger, *Storia degli Stati Uniti d'America*, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 92.

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which is reminiscent of that existing typically in the towns of medieval Europe,"[94] they successfully concluded the "profane experiment" of creating a spontaneous and markedly capitalist bourgeois order based on a self-regulating market.

In the event that the above is not sufficiently convincing, it can be pointed out that the Weberian theory is also queried by English Methodism, "the last great awakening of Puritan ideas of the 18th century."[95] "Its very name," writes Weber, "is an indication of what struck contemporaries as a peculiar feature of its followers: method in the conduct of life in order to attain the *certitudo salutis*."[96] If these words have any meaning, it is to suggest two things: a) that Methodism represented a step forward in the process of rationalization of social behavior; b) that its followers were members of the bourgeoisie seeking a sign of God's benevolence in economic and professional success. In fact, both the former and the latter are completely missing. The founder of Methodism, who had been influenced by his mother's Arminian ideas, thought "the idea of predestination very shocking . . . and attacked it publicly as an insult to God."[97] As for the distinguishing features of conduct "essential for verifying real conversion," they were "the same as those of Calvinism"[98] but had nothing to do with what Weber thought they did. In fact, by "means of grace"[99] Wesley meant exterior signs ordered by God; e.g., prayer, constant study of the Holy Scriptures, and the receiving of communion.[100] These signs were to be founded on faith, "the basis of all the rest,"[101] and love of one's neighbor. "Love . . . is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment, of every commandment of God; that all we do and all we suffer, if we have no charity or love, profited us nothing; and therefore the Apostle dictates us to follow after charity and tends this the more excellent way . . . love of God and man, arising from faith unfeigned, is all in all the fulfilling of the law, the end of every commandment of God."[102]

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94. Fernand Braudel, *Il mondo attuale* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966), vol. II, p. 522.
95. Weber, *L'etica protestante*, *op. cit.*, p. 220.
95. *Ibid.*
96. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
97. Léonard, *Storia del Protestantesimo*, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 169 and p. 179.
98. Weber, *L'etica protestante*, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
99. See Martin Schmidt, *John Wesley: A Theological Biography* (London: Epworth Press, 1971), vol. II, pp. 97ff.
100. John Wesley, *The Marks of the New Birth*, in *The Works* (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book-Room, 1878), vol. V, p. 213.
101. Wesley, *Sermon on the Mount*, in *The Works*, *op. cit.*, vol. V, p. 304.
102. Wesley, *The Use of Money*, in *The Works*, *op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 131 and p. 133.

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In referring to the Christian use of money, Wesley used to repeat in the last years of his activity: "Gain all you can . . . save all you can . . . give all you can."[103] But it is also true that he never tired of reminding his followers that "The love of money is the root of all evil."[104] "Saint Paul," he writes in one of his most typical sermons, "does not say 'They that will be rich *by evil means*, by theft, robbery, oppression or extortion; they that will be rich by fraud or dishonest art' but simply: 'They that will be rich.' These allowing, supposing the means they use to be ever so innocent, to fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful desires, which down men in destruction and perdition."[105] If there exist vices which are natural to man, Wesley tirelessly warned, the hunger for money is one of these, in that "money, of itself, does not seem to gratify any natural desire or appetite of the human mind."[106] He continued: "It is true that this desire, under proper restrictions, is innocent; may be commendable. But when it exceeds the bounds (and how difficult it is not to exceed them) then it comes under the present censure,"[107] since it leads naturally to both one and the other of the "foolish and hurtful desires" against which the Apostle had warned. "Are the richest men the happiest? Have those the largest share of content who have the largest possessions? Is not the very reverse true? Is not a common observation that the richest of men are in general the most discontent, the most miserable? Had not the greater part of them more content when they had less money?"[108] He concluded: "O ye that desire or endeavour to be rich, hear ye the word of the Lord! Why should ye be stricken any more? Will not even experience teach you wisdom? Will ye leap into a pit with your eyes open? Why should you any more fall into temptation? It cannot be but temptation that will beset you, as long as you are the body. But though it should beset you on every side, why will you enter into it? There is no necessity for this: it is your own voluntary act and deed. Why should you any more plunge yourselve into a snare, into the trap Satan has laid for you, that is ready to break your bones in pieces? To crush your soul to death? After fair warning, why should you sink any more into foolish and hurtful desires? Desires as inconsistent with reason as they are with religion itself: desires that have done you more hurt already

103. Wesley, *The Danger of Riches*, in *The Works*, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, pp. 1-2.
104. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
107. *Ibid.*
108. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

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than all the treasures on earth can countervail."[109]

It is difficult to imagine how, on the basis of these teachings, capital could have been accumulated. But it is still more difficult to imagine in what way Wesley's "method" could have contributed in any way to the rationalization of behavior conducted by economic operators. Wesley had, in fact, developed his method under the influence of his Moravian brothers who, like all "enthusiasts," believed that "in questions of abstract theology, the discipline of the intellect [had to be] replaced by a blind act of faith."[110] "One must not think" was the basic commandment of the "enthusiasts," to which the Wesley family belonged by right. He was profoundly disturbed by the fact that rational thought and its typical products, "deism and skepticism, had methodically corroded the foundations of Christian religion."[111] It was necessary to refuel the sources of faith through a preaching based on suggestion and the activation of the irrational element: this, in a nutshell, was Wesley's program.

The method he used to attain his objectives was of plunging his faithfuls into paroxysms, which Ronald Knox has documented as follows:[112] in Cornwall (in 1755) "some experienced the sword of God and fell to the ground"; in Newcastle (in 1757) one of Wesley's guests "was most scandalized when a man fell to the ground and started to implore pity. She herself fell immediately afterwards and many others imitated her"; in Cardiff (in 1758) "two or three persons were struck in the heart and elevated to God loud lamentations and tears"; in Limerick (in 1762) "many were led to 'a new birth' and from all poured rivers of tears with them all crying and praying together as loud as they could, all lying on the ground." Similar episodes could be cited *ad infinitum*, for Wesley was indeed a master at bringing out the irrational in his listeners and producing collective hysteria.

Naturally, such a method could only be repulsive to cultivated classes in general, and to the bourgeoisie in particular, who, absorbed in their profession, had learned to subject their conduct to the imperatives of the *ratio* of the market and its impersonal laws. Of this, Wesley was well aware, hence he addressed "the ignorant people, the huge multitude which lived without any teachings, abandoned by the Church

109. Ronald Knox, *Illuminati e carismatici* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1970), p. 796.

110. Maximin Piette, *La réaction de John Wesley dans l'evolution du Protestantisme* (Bruxelles: Universitas Lovaniensis, 1927), p. 571.

111. Knox, *Illuminati e carismatici*, *op. cit.*, pp. 724- 725.

112. Piette, *La réaction de John Westley*. *op. cit.*, p. 572.

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of England and by the Government."[113] In effect, he celebrated his triumphs and his paroxystic rights "among the coal miners and industrial workers,"[114] in whom he injected "a proud sense of election which supported them in their poverty and rendered them hostile to any revolution which contested Christianity."[115] Hence the gratitude to Methodism expressed by Toynbee, for whom it was thanks to Methodism that "the Labour movement in Great Britain had not taken either an anticlerical or an anticonstitutional turn."[116]

At this point, in order to complete the critical analysis of *The Protestant Ethic*, all that remains to take into consideration is Richard Baxter, whose lessons Weber considered the most typical expression of Puritan ethics and the most important proof to support his theory. But, as one might expect, in Baxter too there is no trace of any "elective affinity"[117] between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. In one of his most typical lectures, Baxter states: "The general good must be placed before one's own personal well-being. Each man is held to do the most good possible, especially when the church or the state are involved. And this cannot be done by abandoning oneself to sloth, but only through work. Just as bees work to fill the hive, so also man, who is a social being, must work for the good of the society to which he belongs and consider his own destiny as part of the general good."[118]

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113. Ernst Troeltsch, *Le dottrine sociali della Chiesa e dei gruppi cristiani* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1970), vol. II, p. 569.

114. Will Durant, *Storia della civiltà* (Milan: Mondadori, 1970), vol. X, p. 180.

115. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), vol. IX, p. 460.

116. Many of Wesley's ideas were in fact simply a copy of those of Baxter, as the founder of Methodism himself recognized on several occasions. See J.T. Wilkinson, *Introductory Essay to Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor* (London: The Epworth Press, 1939), pp. 40-41.

117. Quoted from Ralph Burton Perry, *Puritanisme et democratie* (Paris: Laffont, 1952), p. 356.

118. Weber, *L'etica protestante*, *op. cit.*, p. 287. If one really wants to find an anticipation of Smith's theory on the division of labor, one must look for it in the *Parfait négociant*, published by Jacques Savary in 1675. Here Savary, after defining commerce "a useful and noble profession," justifies it in this manner: "From the way in which God has ordered things on the earth, one sees that He intended establishing union and charity among all men, hence he imposed a social need that they always be in need of each other. He did not desire that everything necessary to life be in the same place. He dispersed His gifts so that men could communicate with each other." See Pierre Léon, *Economie et sociétés pre-industrielles* (Paris: Colin, 1970), vol. II, p. 369. Unfortunately for Weber's theory, Savary was a Catholic. And to render Weber's position even more untenable, one reads in the second half of the XVII century in *Discipline des*

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That a similar conception of the relation between community and individual interests should be considered by Ralph Barton Perry a confirmation of the individualist and capitalist nature of Puritanism is already surprising; that Weber should believe, without feeling the need to supply evidence to support it, that "Baxter indulges in explanations which in more than one point are reminiscent of the well-known apotheosis of the division of labor by Adam Smith,"[119] is too much. The metaphor of the hive, the theorization of the prime importance of the common good and of the duty of individuals to work for the common good, are elements which can be found in exactly the same form in medieval Christian ethics:[120] that ethics which had been gradually worn away by the practice of the *mercatores* who "knew of no other limit of conduct beyond utility . . . and did not have a social, but an individualistic, conception of wealth."[121] Like all Puritan preachers, Baxter desperately sought to reassert the value of this ethic, against the spreading acquisitive and individualistic spirit, repeating, almost obsessively, warnings similar to the following: "Be convinced that heaven is the only treasure and happiness; labor to know that it is thy own and how near it is: frequently and seriously talk of it; endeavour to raise thy affections nearer to it in every duty; to the same purpose improve every object and event; be much in the angelic work of pain; possess thy soul with believing thoughts of the infinite love of God; carefully observe and cherish the motions of the spirit of God."[122] In short: do not be caught up by the world and its ephemeral goods, which remove you from eternal salvation. Remember that "the world devours almost all the time which belongs to God and to the soul; it allows no praying, no reading, no meditation, no thought upon things of the spirit. Even when it gives the impression of praying and listening to the voice of God, the world is in fact absorbed in its own thoughts.

Eglises réformées de France: "All usury is strictly forbidden and repressed and on the question of loans, one will regulate oneself according to the royal orders and the rules of charity." From Henri Hauser, *Les débuts du capitalisme* (Paris: Alcan, 1931), p. 75.

119. "Ames and Baxter, except for the interpretation of usury which they borrowed from Calvin, reproduced in essence the doctrines of Aquinas." Tawney, *Introduction* to Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, *op. cit.*, p. XVI.

120. Amintore Fanfani, *Le origini dello spirito capitalisto in Italia*, (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1933), p. 155.

121. Richard Baxter, *Saints' Everlasting Rest* (Edinburgh: Johnston and Hunter 1880), p. 267.

122. Richard Baxter, "Manuale del cristiano," in Ugo Bonanate ed., *I Puritani* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), pp. 262-263.

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In most families nothing is said or done that is not inspired by the world: they too will one day realize that more important things ought to have occupied their time and that these ought always to have had precedence over the world."[123]

The *certitudo salutis*, which Baxter never tires of repeating, can only be obtained by removing oneself from the world, by not allowing oneself to be caught up by its demands. The Scriptures, he writes, indicate that the certitude of salvation can be obtained: "Let me add some remarks by which you may try your title to the saint's rest. I will only mention these two: taking God for the chief good and heartily accepting Christ for thy only Saviour and Lord."[124] The maxims to which those who aspire to eternal salvation must comply, in dealing with the economic world are as follows: "Remember that, instead of alleviating it, money will increase the slavery in which sin holds you. Is not honest poverty sweeter than riches that are loved to an excess? Reflect upon the fact that wealth renders your salvation more difficult . . . if you believe that therein lies danger for your soul, you cannot love money to that extent and make yourself so weary in order to earn it. If you have inherited money, or if you happen to earn it in your business, well, do not throw it away but use it well. However, there is no reason why you should ask for, or seek, such a serious danger. What more than love and concern for worldly things prevents the conversion of sins? You cannot serve God and Mammon. In short, now you know that the love of money is the root of every evil and the love of the Father is not with those who love the world. It is not in vain that Christ so frequently and with such insistence warns us against riches, describing the danger, the poverty, the foolishness of the worldly rich, telling you how difficult it is for the rich to be saved."[125]

As it is to be expected, the refusal of the market economy which Baxter draws from his vision of salvation is immediate and is such as to make Weber's thesis seem grotesque: "Those who state that goods are worth whatever any other person wishes to give in exchange are constructing a false principle. It is an accepted fact that on the market place each tries to get whatever he can and that *caveat emptor* is the only guarantee. But among Christians this is not the case. Indeed, nor is it the case among non-Christians who have trust, sincerity or simple

123. Baxter, *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, *op. cit.*, p. 149 and pp. 166-167.
124. Baxter, "Massime," in Negri, ed., *Filosofia del lavoro*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 438.
125. Quoted from Werner Sombart, *Il borghese* (Milan: Longanesi, 1978), p. 208.

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decorum."[126] "Avoid the sin rather than bankruptcy."[127] Baxter never tires of repeating these words to his faithful.

Such precepts, which are almost identical to those of medieval Christianity, could never have stimulated or even generated the spirit of capitalism. If anything, it proves that even in the second half of the 17th century, Calvinism continued its fierce battle against Mammon and the satanic temptations of the world, at a time in which even Catholicism had already for some time made a compromise with capitalism.[128] "In fact, the worthy and pious Baxter, whose maxims Weber cites too frequently mutilated or misinterpreted, never indicated that the prosperity of an individual could be a sign of his election. Never did he, nor less the other Puritans of the age, see work as an end to itself in life."[129] The conclusion is self-evident. *The Protestant Ethic* is of no help in resolving the mystery of the birth of capitalism, nor does it contribute to even identifying factors which stimulated the development of the entrepreneurial spirit, "a spirit which was not the creator but the creation of the class of businessmen and which, in order to impose itself, had to fight daily against the Puritan preachers who intended subjecting economic life to the imperatives of Christian ethic, in order to avoid the outburst of worldly love and money, "the source of all evil."[130]

Weber's authority has led innumerable sociologists, and even some historians, to seek the roots of the spirit of capitalism where they could never be, i.e., in religious beliefs, and this has led them to systematically underestimate the structural variables, above all those of a political nature, which made possible the transition from a static to a self-propelling economy. The result is that the problem of the genesis of capitalism has been obscured rather than clarified. This occurred even

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126. From G. F. Nuttal, *Richard Baxter* (London: Nelson, 1965), p. 124. In Baxter there is a legitimation of usury, but it does not exceed the limits established by Calvin, as is evident from the following words: "If all Usury be forbidden it is either by the Law of Nature, or by some positive law of supernatural revelation. If the latter, it is either by some Law of Moses, or by some Law of Christ. If the former, it is either as against the Rule of Pity to God, or against the supernaturally revealed Laws of Moses or of Christ, is not unlawful. But there is some Usury which is against none of all these. Ergo there is some Usury which is not unlawful" (*A Christian Directory*, *op. cit.*, p. 120).

127. Read the eighth of the *Provincial letters*, in which Pascal attacks the accommodating social ethic which the Jesuits had formulated to somehow legitimate usury.

128. Pierre Jaccard, *Storia del lavoro* (Rome: Armando, 1963), p. 166.

129. Robertson, *Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism*, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

130. See Luciano Pellicani, *Saggio sulla genesi del capitalismo. Alle origini della Modernità* (Milan: SugarCo, 1988).

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though in the early years of the century many scholars, from Fischer to Rachfahl, Sombart, Tawny, Robertson and Fanfani up to Samuelsson, Luthy, Trevor-Roper, Braudel, Delumeau and Kamen, repeatedly emphasized the fact that *The Protestant Ethic* constitutes a serious historical distortion. To no avail: Weber's hypothesis is considered an empirically corroborated theory, while being in conflict with everything that historiography has ascertained concerning the nature of Calvinism and its long term consequences.

It is not easy to identify those reasons which led Weber to undertake to demonstrate, against all evidence, that Calvinism was one of the causes of the process of formation of modern market society. One, however, is obvious: to respond, with a positive critique, to Marx's challenge, by demonstrating the autonomy of ideas and values and their power to generate substantial social changes. Without Marxism, which was obsessive both from the scientific and the political viewpoint, maybe *The Protestant Ethic* would never have been written. Undoubtedly, it would never have met with the favor of so many sociologists more concerned at finding substantial argument against historical materialism than at checking the validity of Weber's account.

Maybe the secret of the disconcerting success of *The Protestant Ethic* lies in this: the battle it fought was political and cultural, and the problem of the genesis of capitalism was only a pretext. The stake involved was another: intellectual hegemony among opposing *Weltanschauungen*. Once that point is clear, it may be possible to break free from the myth of Calvinism. It will then emerge clearly that in Weber's works, as well as in those of Marx, there are the essential elements for a political explanation of the historical formation of modern market society, in light of which *The Protestant Ethic* will finally appear for what it is: a work which should be put aside once and for all.

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The Limits of Glasnost: *Introduction to Likhanov's "Organized Crime in Central Asia"*

This article was written by one of the best Soviet investigative journalists for today's most open Soviet journal, *Ogoniok*, which, however, refused to publish it. Several months ago the article, already in galley-proofs, began circulating in Moscow. In all likelihood the editors were willing to print it, but were prevented from doing so by censorship, still alive and kicking in these days of *glasnost*. The reason for the publication ban is not the discussion of Soviet corruption in itself. The Soviet press is now rife with descriptions of corruption at the very summit of Soviet leadership. Articles about legendary corruption in Central Asian republics, administered by such Politburo members as Rashidov and Kunaev, have been staple fare for Soviet readers since Gorbachev's ascent to power. Moreover, Soviet mass media have discarded all reticence in portraying the Marcos-style corruption of the Brezhnev clan. Brezhnev's family and cronies have plundered more than 1,300 kilograms of gold and jewelry from the State Treasury, which the Moscow criminal police has fruitlessly tried to recover over the last couple of years. Brezhnev's son and son-in-law, who were promoted to deputy ministerial positions and sponsored into the Central Committee by their provident father, are now under investigation for bribery on the scale of millions of rubles. Brezhnev's Minister of the Interior, also accused of having received a few million rubles in bribes, preferred to commit suicide. As fate had it, Lev Timofeev, jailed in 1985 for publishing abroad his book *Soviet Peasants*, shared a cell with the former minister of the Uzbekistan cotton industry, who was accused of grand corruption. The ex-minister complained that he always honestly shared his profits with higher authorities. One time he visited

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Brezhnev with a pure gold brick as a gift and was favorably received by the Boss. Now Timofeev, newly released from jail, complains that whenever he passes Brezhnev Square in Moscow the brick always comes to mind.

Given this deluge of other articles, the reason for the ban of Likhanov's article can be understood if we compare it with a subsequent piece on corruption in Moscow and Leningrad which the persistent reporter managed to publish in *Ogoniok* (May 19, 1988). As in his first article, Likhanov clearly delineates the mechanism by which it has become an attribute of organized crime. First, a sector of illegal economic activity appeared in the scarcity-ridden Soviet economy. The enterprising operators of this so-called second economy realized hefty, albeit illegal incomes by providing consumer goods and services in violation of the state monopoly on all such activities. In conditions of incredible shortages created by the state monopoly, the superprofits available in the second economy justified the high degree of risk involved. The growing number of underground millionaires quickly prompted the appearance of a racket whereby armed groups of extortionists would relieve the new enterpeneurs of their illegal wealth. If caught, these extortionists could always count on clemency, since they preyed on "criminals against the state" and hence accomplished a socially-useful task. The racket proved to be such a safe and profitable business that by the 1980s several thousand racketeer bands began coalescing into clans and fighting each other over territorial control. At the same time, underground businessmen began hiring bodyguards and negotiating fixed protection payments with the racketeers.

The publication of Likhanov's second article indicates that the Soviet authorities are coming to appreciate the dangers of the racket. Likhanov cites the opinion of an expert in the Ministry of the Interior: "First of all, the racket promotes the concentration of large monetary sums in the hands of members of a certain social group which, in turn, leads to the organization of ever larger criminal structures. Secondly, the racket promotes a general increase in criminal activity, because when there is a large pool of repeat offenders it becomes possible to finance almost any kind of crime: from drug trafficking to murder for hire. Thirdly, the racket actively promotes corruption in all social strata and hence the diffusion of economic control. After all, the racketeer money is mostly spent on bribing various officials."

Since 1988, when the Soviet government approved a new law encouraging the formation of production cooperatives and allowing limited

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cooperative property, the struggle against racketeering suddenly acquired greater urgency. The authorities realized that organized crime might simply suffocate the tender seedlings of the newborn cooperative movement. "According to some estimates," writes Likhanov, "the struggle for control of cooperatives will peak in the racketeer circles in the summer of 1988. By then, given propitious economic conditions, the cooperatives should earn sufficient seed money." The threat is real, and this is what helped Likhanov's article on the racket in Moscow and Leningrad appear in the country's most popular magazine.

But in the central cities corrupt party officials accepted bribes in exchange for favors without recourse to gangsters and *mafiosi*. In the Central Asian and probably other Southern republics, however, party bosses, ministers, public prosecutors and judges cooperate with the racketeers, contract hired killers to remove competitors, and — as reported by *Literaturnaia Gazeta* — occasionally build private prisons to incarcerate personal enemies. Having demonstrated a virtual interdependence between the Uzbek political-economic elite and organized crime, Likhanov obviously overstepped the limits of *glasnost* in the article that follows.

V. Z.

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*Organized Crime in Central Asia**

Dmitri Likhanov

Crime on Happiness Street.

In the morning came a telex: armed robbery in the city of Yangijul. The offenders had taken a car and 2,000 rubles in bonds. An hour later, we were on our way along the wide streets of Tashkent and reached the highway leading to Yangijul in record time. On Happiness Street, we saw the white "Volga" of Major Almatov, an Assistant Director of the Uzbek Internal Affairs Bureau, and a police car. The neighbors were shaking their heads in disapproval, talking quietly among themselves. Teenagers, filthy with soot, were running around. Several pairs of shoes were strewn about the entrance. People went in and out of the house, made inquiries, chatted. It was like a funeral, but this time there were no casualties.

Major Almatov interrogated the victims and, from time to time, wrote something in a notebook. Everyone spoke Uzbek, which is why I understood very little. But the tears of an elderly woman sitting across from the Major betrayed what happened the night before. Her husband stood silently by, as if not wanting to think about it. "Alright," said Almatov in Russian, "I get it. I'll go out to the yard." Then the husband opened up about the previous night: "After the news, they started showing a very good Uzbek gangster movie. So, we were sitting there, drinking tea. Our daughter was asleep in the other room. Suddenly, the door opened. Three masked men come in. One had a gun, another a rifle. 'Don't move,' they said. 'Where is the money?' I had

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just received my pension check the day before and had 90 rubles in my pocket. They took those. Then one of them put a knife to my wife's throat. I feared they would kill her. . . ." "No, he was just scaring us," the woman interjected. "He needed the money. I took off my golden earrings and handed them over. Then I took out 2000 rubles in bonds and handed them over. But the tall one was not satisfied. He kept asking for more money. I told him, 'This is it, there is no more, had there been more, would I have kept it? Life is sure worth more.' Then the tall one asked, 'Where is your daughter? If you don't give us the money, I'll take her to the yard and impale her right in front of you.' They went to look for my daughter, but did not find her. Thank God! Then, he said, 'We'll hurt you, and then you'll fork everything over.' Suddenly, they started rushing. They tied and gagged us. When leaving, they said, 'If you talk to anyone, we'll find you wherever you are and kill you.' Then, they left."

In the yard, Almatov was pensive. Not far away, the detectives were making a plaster mold of a fresh footprint. "So, how are things?" I asked. He shrugged his shoulders: "We are using police dogs," but they are not picking up the scent. Six investigating teams are on the case. We informed Tashkent and the border areas of Kasakhstan and Turkmenistan about the incident. Operation 'Intercept' is under way." "So, who are the three masked men?" "A gang," said Almatov, and squinted, looking at the bright Asian sun.

Gangs? Today? Can something like that really happen? Is it not an idle fancy or a bad dream? No: Central Asia has been overwhelmed by organized crime.

The Gangs

"It happened approximately at midnight. Aslan knocked. The man of the house opened the door — an Uzbek, about 50 years old, with a son about 25. Aslan said we were cops. They let us in. Inside were the man, his son and daughter, an elderly woman, another woman, and the man's 14-year-old niece. The women were talking in the next room. I first hit a young woman, then I knocked an old woman to the floor. Sadyk hit the man's wife, knocked her down and started tying her up. At the same time, Aslan told the man that, if he did not give us the money, he would be killed. The man brought out a bag of money and gave it to us. We left the house, got into the car and returned to Tashkent. The bag contained 16,000 rubles. The 13th crime was committed in the city of Kitab. Tairat came to me and said that Zhuma had called. We got into the car and drove there. We took two girls with

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us. We arrived in Kitab around 10 p.m. We stopped near a river. Sadyk and Marat changed into police clothes. We approached the house. Both Zukriddin and I were armed. We went into the yard. A man sleeping there woke up, but Sadyk kicked him in the jaw. I opened the door to the house, Zukriddin and Sadyk dragged the man in. He regained consciousness. Sadyk started questioning him about the money. He said he had none. Then Sadyk lit a kerosene stove and dragged the man to the fire. Sadyk said, 'If you don't give us the money, I'll burn your face.' Zukriddin pulled out a revolver and also threatened the man. In the meantime, Marat and I searched the rooms. We found a suitcase on the shelf and threw it to Zukriddin. It contained 10,000 rubles. Zukriddin and Sadyk tied the man down and we took off."

The Ansorov-Kasymov gang committed 64 crimes. Of those 25 included stealing both government and personal property, while 14 were criminal assaults, etc. It cost the state over 258,500 rubles. Kamilov's gang consisted of 15 people. In October 1984, they broke into Resnick's apartment in Tashkent and left with 12,000 rubles. On June 16, 1984, armed with knives, they broke into the Yuliantz apartment in the city of Shakhrikane and left with 15,000 rubles. The Kogan gang netted 10,000 rubles after breaking into Kamatov's apartment. Members of the Gorkin gang, armed with a revolver and a knife, broke into Babadzhanov's house. They killed him as well as a woman who happened to be there at the time. They left with 13,700 rubles and other valuables worth an additional 32,000 rubles. The Yune group has 23 members and committed 42 crimes; the Balashin gang had 22 members and has committed 48 serious crimes including one murder.

While studying vast collections of criminal cases, I was trying to picture today's criminal: who is he? What made him leave normal life and join a gang? Most of the gangsters arrested have been sentenced to long jail terms, which they serve in remote regions. Some have already been executed. Not a single professional criminal is over 50. Most of them are between 20 and 30. That is not surprising: this is an occupation requiring strong muscles and a young person's skills. Indeed, most gangsters can fight and shoot, know how to handle knives and are superb drivers. Generally, before joining a gang, they had no records and only a few ever served any time at all. Some, such as Bolshin, the leader of one of the largest gangs, were Party members. Many have had some high school, and some have even gone to college. What made these people form armed gangs and commit the ugliest crimes?

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A "White Collar" Attack

"*Bismi allakhi: ar-zachman, ar-rachim!*" It was the time of a daily ritual. An old Uzbek in a white turban touched his dry brown face with his palms and bowed towards Mecca. The oriental bazaar sounded like a thousand voices. There was the smell of barbequed lamb and of sweat. The man selling embroidered caps was drinking green tea, bright dresses were blowing in the hot desert wind, old Korean women were skillfully cutting radishes, and one could hear the clear voice of Alla Pugachova accompanied by sad Arab songs recorded on smuggled cassettes.

It was mid-afternoon on a Saturday. He started following me immediately after I blended into the crowd. Still a boy, he was wearing a fashionable Marilyn Monroe T-shirt and a gold necklace with a gold Muslim crescent. He caught up with me by the shoemaker's shop and asked me to step inside: "Do you want jeans?" he asked. I patted my cotton pants, meaning that I did not. "Videos? Cigarettes? Disks? Hawaiian shirts? What do you need?" "I don't want anything. How about you?" He smiled, showing rotten teeth. "Don't you get it? Money!" And, suddenly, he disappeared into the crowd.

Recall, for a moment, the recent past, the cheerful broadcasts of those years praising this hospitable land and its leaders . . . . Recall "the cotton trials." Recall finally, the district leaders — those emirs with Party certificates, who for years have been destroying the Uzbek economy and its moral values. What were they after? The answer is simple: like puny blackmarketeers, they were hungry for one thing — money and probably power, for power in those days also meant more income. In 1982-1983, there was a shortage of 1.6 million tons of raw cotton: over 500 managers and other officials were convicted of bribery and embezzlement. The wages paid for unreported raw cotton were about 1 million rubles. The damages caused by the cotton moguls amounted to 2 billion rubles, 1 billion of which was embezzled. And if we consider the billions of rubles stolen in trade, domestic services, and the silk industry, which have been discovered only recently, it is clear that those moguls knew how to make money. . . . But where did all the money go?

Most of the stolen billions were used to bribe various officials, some of it sank into the thieves' deep pockets, and what remained was reinvested in the business. Year after year, a powerful caste of Soviet millionaires was growing ever more powerful in Uzbekistan. People such as Odilov, President of the Agro-Industrial Unit of Papsk, deputy of the Supreme Soviet, member of the Central Committee of Uzbekistan

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and a hero of socialist labor; Kudratov, Director of Bucharian manufactured goods industry; Muminov, Director of Uitepin Bread Factory of the Dzhizak district, etc. But these were only the moguls operating legally. Most white collar criminals have always been petty entrepreneurs. . . . Take a stroll around Tashkent sometime, in the old part of town, and wander into the various marketplaces. Immediately, you will notice an abundance of all sorts of shops, diners and cafes. There one can find anything. Once I asked an Uzbek man about industries whose products were not registered. The man worked for the Office of the Prosecutor and had access to the information. But he just shrugged: "Don't know, comrade, really. It's hard to say. A lot of people are involved in this. Some have their own shish-kebab diners, some produce jeans." "Their own? I don't understand." "Yeah, basically. Someone, say, has a quota for 30,000 rubles. He makes 32,000 and takes the surplus. These people are called shop-stewards *(Tsechoviki)*. We have lots of those." "Are you talking about co-op industries?" "Oh, no! The state-owned ones."

Entrepreneurial activity has been around for a long time. Occasionally there would be criminal proceedings against shop-stewards, but usually no one paid any attention to them. Then, in the early 1980's, corruption and bribery engulfed many branches of industries like a cancer. It was at this time that the first armed gangs appeared. And not without reason, for shop-stewards created a favorable environment for gangsters. It is obviously a shame that some people were robbed of 10,000 or 50,000 rubles. But where did all this money come from? The victims held fairly responsible positions in trade, domestic services, agriculture and public services. Many were managers of stores, restaurants, and cafés, supervisors in warehouses. Some of them were involved in shady deals and, because of that, declared losses considerably lower than what was actually taken. These people were the primary targets.

Tumashunias was dissatisfied with his regular income and decided to get rich. Having served in the armed forces, he remained where he had been stationed and eventually decided to organize a gang. He later started recruiting people. This is how he met Muradzhon, who was serving time in the city of Chirchik. Together they worked out a plan to rob important trade officials. This included a director of Chirchik's meat-packing plant and a director of Chirchiktorg. When Tumashunias was asked why he chose those people as his targets, he answered, "I was told that they live off surplus income and have saved a lot of

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money." In 1984 shop-stewards in the Uzbekistan were going through a terrible time because of gangster terror. In most cases, the targets were "white collar" criminals. During their trials, gang leaders sought to excuse their criminal dealings. Surprisingly, many claimed the same thing: "Yes, we have committed robbery, but we were robbing other criminals. Thus we were causing no damage to the state. On the contrary, we were restoring social justice." This was meant for sympathetic audiences. Definite damage to the state was caused by "white collar" involvement with organized crime and organized crime's penetration of "white collar" activities.

The capital of the people involved in these activities was growing. This brought together criminals, shop-stewards and large-scale embezzlers. Criminals turned to businessmen for quick profits. Businessmen hired criminals for protection. These criminals would protect their patrons and their property by resolving conflicting situations and fighting off, intimidating, or frightening the competition. Thus, the illegal moguls, supported by various Party and economy bosses, became heads of "white collar" crime. Criminal leaders eventually got involved in producing and selling unregistered products. They started investing money in illegal enterprises, receiving commissions on the profits. They would figure the percentage of commissions to be imposed on the embezzlers' income, thereby guaranteeing it. Toward the end of the 1970's, during their "Krasnodar Plenum," criminal leaders adopted an unusual resolution: to charge illegal shops producing unregistered products a 15% commission. Obviously, it was a privately-made decision and many shop-stewards were surprised when they started receiving visits from strange-looking young men. This all happened in roughly the following way.

One day a group of people would appear uninvited at a factory involved in, say, the illegal manufacture of shoes. They would talk to the owner. "We have been watching you for a long time and know perfectly well what you are up to. There is nothing to hide. You are a target for the Department to Combat Socialist Property Theft. Therefore, we offer you the following: work to your liking and you will have no worries later, but once a month we get part of your money. If the police get suspicious,we will take care of it. If you are thrown in jail, you will get privileged treatment and be released with the first amnesty. If you refuse our offer, things could get rough. Soon they will put you away. By the way, do you have kids and a young wife? We can't guarantee their security. Make your choice."

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After such a conversation, even the toughest businessman would give in. The gangsters are not bluffing: they are well connected. Even the most experienced shop-stewards understand that it would be unwise to cross the gangsters and that they should be cut in. That way, the shop-stewards and their property would be protected against attacks by wandering gangs and, at the same time, have access to enforcers *vis à vis* stubborn debtors. White collar crime moguls immediately understood this, especially since they could readily afford to hire assassins and bodyguards.

Azimov, director of Sovkhoz "Pachtakor" of the Kashkadarin district, hired several assassins — Azizov and the Tsekani brothers — to rub out a former cashier named Saidov and others who testified that Azimov had embezzled over half a million rubles. After receiving an advance of 20,000 rubles, the hitmen threw a bomb into Saidov's car. The bomb did not explode, so the assassins used guns. A member of the Boloshin gang and two accomplices, under orders of Radzhapov, a top manager of Public Eating Services, murdered Mizdadajev for 30,000 rubles. He and his accomplices also set fire to the house of a worker of the Department to Combat Socialist Property Theft. The gang was also planning to disfigure a Trade Minister. Eventually, Radzhapov himself was murdered by hired assassins.

The hot sun burns everything on its way, but here, in a Tashkent jail, it is cold and dark. He sits across from me and smokes an aromatic Indian cigarette. His name is Hasan. He is 28 years old: a hired assassin. On orders from Kurbanov, the Prosecutor of the Kalinin district of the city of Tashkent, Hasan and his brother drowned Artemchenko, an interregional profiteer. He told me about their preparation for the murder; about drinking wine and eating steak an hour before; finally, about drowning and throwing the body in a river. One thing Hasan could not explain to me, however, was why he had ended up behind bars only now and not 3 years earlier, when he committed his dirty deed? Why were the shots and explosions heard for such a long time without punishment?

Many knew, or at least guessed, that Dzhanzakov accepted bribes. They knew that, to get his job, he paid off the Chief of Tashkent Auto Inspection, Colonel Salachitalinov. They knew that Dhzlanzakov himself would not turn down "contributions" for promoting some of his workers. But they preferred to keep quiet. Yuldashev, the Chief of the Department of the State Auto Inspection and Road Patrol Services of Tashkent, however, could not keep quiet. He had accumulated considerable

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incriminating evidence, which he conveyed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and to the Central Committee. But all letters were returned to Yuldashev's bosses. Although the letters were unsigned, Dzhanzakov knew their source. His relation with Yuldashev had been strained for a long time. In August of 1983, the post of "Chief of the State Auto Inspection" became vacant. Allegedly, there were two candidates for this position: two irreconcilable enemies, Yuldashev and Dzhanzakov. This is when Dzhanzakov decided to get rid of his rival. On a nice autumn day, he invited Chief Lieutenant Nurmukhamedov into his office and sternly announced his plans. He also added that Yuldashev's removal had been approved in the Internal Affairs Bureau, that all traces would be concealed and the case presented as a traffic accident. Dzhanzakov asked to find him a reliable person, which Nurmukhamedov did: a certain Ibragimov, who had been convicted twice already. But several days went by and Ibragimov got cold feet. "Not a word about our dealings," Dzhanzakov said to Nurmukhamedov, and began searching for another candidate. He was lucky: he found Chief Lieutenant Saidanvar Kambaritdin in the Uzbek State Auto Inspection and Internal Affairs Bureau willing to do the job with Zhamanov, a former cop and now a metal worker for Tashkent's Tram/Bus Bureau.

On October 5, Dzhanzakov became head of Tashkent's Uzbek State Auto Inspection. Soon after, two anonymous letters appeared which uncovered the new boss' corruption. This was, no doubt, Yuldashev trying to discredit the new chief. Immediately, Kambaritdinov received a call: "Speed things up." Several days before the attempt, he bought a hunting rifle and some cartridges. On the evening of December 20, Yuldashev left his office in his limousine. He was followed by a private Zhiguli driven by Kambaritdinov, with Zhamanov in the back seat brandishing his rifle. On Farkhadski street, Kambaritdinov sped up and Zhamanov fired two shots that killed Yuldashev.

In 1984, the Office of the Prosecutor of Uzbek Republic received 13,557 complaints about police violations. During that same year, there were 267 criminal cases against 283 policemen. All complaints were the result of the Internal Affairs Minister's policy or, more precisely, his lack of policy. Eventually this resulted in the arrest of Yachiev, a former Minister of Uzbekistan; Yuldashev, Chief of the Department to Combat Socialist Property Theft; and almost all the members of the Ministry Collegium. Furthermore, Yachiev's successor, Ergashev, killed himself, and 98% of the former chiefs of the district's Internal Affairs Bureau ended up behind bars.

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The Police Department was not the only one that fell under the spell of bribery. So did the Prosecutor's Office, the courts, law firms, and even prisons. Money could "cover up" any criminal dealings. It decided everything. Some gangs went as far as buying off members of the police force. This time they were no longer simply confidential informants but faithful soldiers of the underground. The following are some accounts of this cooperation conveyed by members of Shamshadinov's gang, which was organized in 1984 and operated in the Andizhan district of Uzbekistan.

Avetisova, Chief Supervisor of the laboratory of the Andizhan milk plant — a major embezzler (she and other plant workers stole about 2 million rubles): ". . . I have had a hard time with my husband. He drank a lot, smoked pot and humiliated me. Having decided that I could no longer live with him, I decided to kill him. In May 1984, I told Rakhimov, an Assistant Supervisor of the Internal Affairs Bureau. He tried to calm me down and said he would think of something. He said, a man would call me. 'You can trust this man,' he added."

Shamshadinov (a gang leader): "Fazylzhan, who was a good friend of mine, once asked me to kill Mrs. Avetisova's husband. I called her and we met near the drugstore in the town of Andizhan. She gave me 20,000 rubles. I agreed. I told Rachimov all this and he said that I should do it." Karoviakovsky (a gang member): "On July 13, I changed into Shamshadinov's old clothes and went with him to Avetisov's work place. We finally saw him and I, according to plan, asked him to help me fix a motorcycle. He started taking the carburator apart. I had a gun. Shamshadinov also had one. I was too scared to kill Avetisov, so Shamshadinov came up from behind and shot him in the back of the head. We took the body into the bushes and left it there. For my 'services' I received 3,500 rubles from Shamshadinov." Avetisova: "On July 13, Shamshadinov called me and said, 'Now we are even. I killed your husband.' After that, I gave Rakhimov 10,000 rubles for himself and 3,000 more to give Shamshadinov for killing my husband."

Rakhimov usually acted as a legal consultant to the gang, and sometimes as a liason between the gangsters and white collar criminals. The other police turncoats, however, were happy with their average positions in the gangs. For instance, a group of bootleggers headed by Abdulaev engaged in robberies, illegal transportation and sales of alcohol, was using Zhanzymbaev, the Senior Inspector in the Passport Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kara-Kalpak Republic. Zhanzymbaev was needed for delivering packages without having to declare

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them to the State Auto Inspection. Yun's gang, which controlled the sales and production of drugs in 6 districts, employed 4 members of the police force. This was necessary for intimidation and 'official' confiscation of their undeclared products.

Who is Who?

Toward evening the restaurant was filling up. At first glance, it seemed as if they were regular patrons. But closer inspection indicated otherwise. Here were two young prostitutes with almond eyes, shiny lipstick, they are having a lazy conversation with a well-groomed pimp. A rowdy bunch of blackmarketeers was drinking (they were relatively young, wearing playboy-like glasses, tennis shoes and Nikes). Professional gamblers slowly drank expensive cognac. They wore massive rings on their fingers, shiny necklaces on their hairy chests and had a glaring look. From time to time, petty criminals, slightly-high drug-addicts and other suspicious characters wandered in. Many of them have known each other for some time. When they met, they usually grinned displaying their golden teeth and hugged each other.

Rumor has it one can deal for opium, buy foreign currency or find stolen goods there. All these people consider themselves autonomous agents, but most are in the gangs' claws. The gangs take a cut from gamblers, prostitutes and thieves. Gamblers rate higher than shop-stewards, thieves, racketeers and profiteers. Their revenues run into 6 figures. The games are obviously fixed. This gambling and late payment of debts generates serious crimes. The characters in the restaurant constitute what is euphemistically referred to as "the anti-social environment," where future criminal cadres are forged.

"I, Kasymov Abdukarim, born in 1961, after graduating from high school in 1978 started working at a ceramics factory. In 1979, I left for the military service and, after the service, started working at 'Spartak' stadium as an instructor. In 1976 I was attending a boxing class when I met Sadykov. He said he was respected by the others and had friends who were thieves. In the summer of that year, he introduced me to a friend of his — Chanbajev. In 1983, I met another friend of his, Aslan. In the same year, Aslan told a group of us that there is a place where one can pick up good money in the city of Urengoi. . . ."

No one knows how one enters a gang. Most often, it is roughly the way a former soldier of Anzorov's gang described it. Recruiters search Tashkent's restaurants and sport clubs for strong young men who love money and fun. The recruiters introduce them to their leader and he,

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to check out the novices, gives them an assignment. And they go. They go for different reasons. One of them really needs a Japanese cassette player; the other has to pay a gambling debt; the third has never had more than 1000 rubles in his pocket but, this time, he was offered 5000. Everyone has his or her own needs. The "easy dough" blinds them. And once they are hooked, there is no turning back. Traitors are severely punished.

"We took Khonbabaev's car. He, Anzorov and I went to a subway station where Anzorov spotted L'an and said he wanted to talk to him. He told him to get in the car and started driving. Soon we came to a cornfield. It was getting dark. Anzorov got out of the car and took L'an aside. When I approached them, Anzorov asked me to bring a revolver. I did that. Anzorov ordered L'an to get down on his knees and beg for forgiveness. L'an refused. Then Anzorov shot him in the chest. When L'an fell, Anzorov shot him in the head . . . . I thought L'an was still alive and told Anzorov. He gave me the gun and told me to shoot him again. I did. . . ."

Little is known about gang leaders and their closest advisors, for they never work in the open. They have a whole army of subordinates who, at any moment, are ready to obey the leader's command. If the professional thief of the 1950's never worked, wore an old hat and canvas shoes, his counterpart in the 1980's is entirely different. As a rule, he officially holds some insignificant job (in order not to be convicted for parasitism), drives an expensive car, dines in the best restaurants and keeps no drugs or weapons at home. He is clean and always has an alibi. Also, he knows the criminal code well. Thus it is difficult to nail a boss, even when there is strong evidence against him, for it is hard to find any gangster willing to testify against his boss. The gangs have a pledge of silence. Violating this pledge means death.

In 1985, Tashkent had about 20 criminal gangs. They spread their spheres of influence over Tashkent, its districts and regions, which often led to confrontation among gangs. To maintain their prestige in the "anti-social" environment, the leaders keep close relations with the so-called "thieves-in-law," who have organized criminal funds maintained by Tashkent's gang leaders. These funds are used to help convicts in prisons, deliver drugs and bribe officials. On the whole, local organized gangs model themselves after the mafia. The mafia?

Public Danger No. 1

Didlorenko was urgently called to Moscow from his vacation. After a

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short conversation, he was asked to go to Uzbekistan. Soon he was appointed First Assistant to the Minister of Internal Affairs. Today he coordinates efforts in fighting organized crime.

A bright Asian sun disappeared on the horizon. But our conversation was not even close to ending. "Several years ago in the USSR words like racket, bootlegging, kidnapping, mafia, only figured in detective novels and movies. . . . Now we encounter them almost daily. . . . At some stage we need to vary tactics and strategies of crime fighting. The most important blow should be to organized crime, for the leaders have a hold on all the networks of the criminal world. Then we need to free some of our workers from their everyday routine, to organize them into a special unit for fighting organized crime. That unit will act under the auspices of the Criminal Search Office." A department for fighting organized crime has been part of the Ministry for over a year and a half. During this time, workers created voluminous files on former and current leaders of criminal gangs, their assistants and executioners. Thanks to this work, the mechanisms of gang formation, structure and the nature of its anti-social activity are well-known.

The heat is on. However, the very fact of having to create a special branch for fighting organized crime betrays a dangerous symptom. There were times when we preferred to keep silent about our flaws, to claim we had none. So, why make any effort in fighting a nonexistent evil. . . . This way we literally missed the appearance and growth of prostitution, drugs and, probably, organized crime as well. Even now, when there are shoot-outs in the streets and squares of Uzbekistan, when organized crime is well documented, I have more than once heard authoritative voices denying its existence. They say everything has been greatly exaggerated. Why? I ask myself. Why do they need to say that? Later, I understood what it was. All these evasive bureaucrats, wearing the democratic clothes of *perestroika*, are, first of all, afraid of extra work, which definitely will fall on their sinful heads, together with new problems. But, above all, they are afraid of something else — of responsibility. It was they who missed the problem and kept silent about it. When I was working on this material, I suddenly encountered an interesting document, addressed to criminal notables as "our honest criminal brethren." This document also stated that: "In our case, we should also use the fact that our country denies the existence of organized crime. . . ."

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Jameson and Habermas

Thomas Huhn

Jameson and Habermas are two sides of the same bad coin. They are postmodern in their retreat from an aesthetic of modernism and in their throttling of the Other to make it speak with meaning. This retreat is a further regression to reified subjectivity. Jameson and Habermas are thus postmodern in their regression behind an aesthetics of modernism that at least acknowledged the nonsubjective. This is not to imply, however, that modernism is the final form of aesthetic production but only that an aesthetic theory that refuses any potential opposition to reigning social relations destroys what has been, at least since Kant, the peculiar character of aesthetic artifacts, experience and theory. The postmodern insistence on articulation is not to be castigated, rather only the *satisfaction* with an articulation that is but the echo of subjectivity. Jameson and Habermas are the unwitting theoretical sponsors of such satisfaction. They each propound an aesthetic theory that shrinks back from the dialectic in Adorno's conception of modern artworks (which reveals modernist works as both autonomous and social) and assumes a position from which a frightened subjectivity can once again assert that it is master — because everything turns out to be comprehensible, including aesthetic objects. But despite their social character, aesthetic objects retain their own autonomy and can never be subsumed by a logic of comprehension.

This is the fundamental insight of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* — subjectivity constitutes itself (and this is pleasurable) via an aesthetic judgment which cannot (yet does) subsume a particular under a universal concept. Aesthetic judgment is thus the originary transformation of reason into cunning. The impossibility of articulating the beautiful or

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the sublime is the subjective recognition of alterity at the heart of subjectivity itself. Both Jameson and Habermas subsume aesthetic experience under a valorized subjectivity, which thereby serves to efface the very possibility of opposition to reified subjectivity. They facilitate a return of a master subject — a subjectivity that doubles its mastery over the self and nature by extending its reifying way over that which opposes it — through an aesthetics of content. In their diligent pursuit of an aesthetics of meaningfulness that colonizes the space in which some sign of what might stand beyond subjectivity could appear, both critics function as the avant-garde of dominating subjectivity. An alternative aesthetics would cut against the grain of subjectivity — an aesthetics seeking to restore the primacy of the object within subjective production, not the primacy of a desiring subjectivity, whatever the content of its desire.

In *The Political Unconscious*, Jameson writes: "The assertion of a political unconscious proposes that we. . . explore the multiple paths that lead to the unmasking of cultural artifacts as socially symbolic acts."[1] History, as both past experience and its representation, becomes a cultural artifact and exists within each artifact. The political unconscious is where history becomes narrative; it makes cultural artifacts and culture *per se*. The generation of the appearance of history by the political unconscious and History as a transcendent *noumenon* is described in Jameson's discussion of Althusser and Lacan: "History is *not* a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but that, as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and . . . our approach to it and to the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious."[2] Since History and the Real cannot be approached, let alone apprehended, except in the narratives produced by the political unconscious, the focus shifts to the symbolic act of narrative. Yet once narrative is treated as solely symbolic, i.e., as a carrier of meaning, there is no further impediment to disclosing its meaning.

Narratives are social mediations which, as such, are at least in principle accessible to the constituting subject. The problem of the status of meaning arises not just when the constituting subject is alienated — at which time meaning becomes no longer accessible because it seems to be other — but rather in the subjective supposition that some originary meaning within any and all aesthetic objects exhausts the content

1. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981), p. 20.
2. *Ibid.* p. 35.

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and form of those objects. This supposition is the "unconscious" recognition of the loss of meaning and a reactionary attempt to posit and entrench meaning. This supposition is thus the reflex of a self-preservation that regresses behind the concept of culture: "culture — as that which goes beyond the system of self-preservation of the species — involves an irrevocably critical impulse toward the *status quo* and all institutions thereof."[3] The "critical impulse" directed against the social and subjective *status quo* is precisely what falls by the wayside in Jameson's ideal of the transparency of aesthetic production and objects. Adorno remarks on such an ideal: "the materialistic transparency of culture has not made it more honest, only more vulgar."[4]

Jameson tries to extend this tautology within meaning a step further: there should be no impediment to disclosing the meaning, the source of the production of meaning itself. He moves from the content of a particular narrative (meaning) to form (narrative) to content (meaning) of aesthetic form. It is this third and final move that is unwarranted by the nature of form and by the peculiar character of form in modernism. The social meaning of aesthetic form cannot be fully articulated — form itself cannot be exhausted by meaning. Adorno's premise of aesthetic form as both autonomous and a *fait social* is the specification of the nonsubjective and social aspects of those objects which Kant found underlying the possibility of aesthetic judgment. The autonomy of aesthetic form is what separates its products from every other form of social production. This autonomy is the recognition of Kant's insight that aesthetic objects resist and oppose the progress of subjectivity's instrumental rationality via concepts and meaning. Jameson forgets, despite his apparent recognition of the inarticulable nature of form as "unconscious," that form is necessarily opaque: it is the organization and positing of meaning, which nonetheless implicitly opposes it. Although History and the Real may be approached via narrative, they are not genuinely symbolic, since they cannot be apprehended in and of themselves. Instead of representing them, symbols are ciphers of their displacement. Although symbols stand in place of History and the Real, they do not stand *for* them: they point toward or away from them, not, as Jameson suggests, toward a precise referent.

What is specifically regressive for aesthetic theory in Jameson's

3. Theodor W. Adorno, "Culture and Administration," *Telos* 37 (Fall 1978), pp. 99-100.

4. Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), p. 34.

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program of a political unconscious, is that he proposes to supply the referent for that which Kant and Adorno theorized as exceeding subjectivity. By locating subjectivity as the ultimate referent and source of an affirmative meaning, Jameson seems to grant to subjectivity a lost and longed-for legitimacy. That this seeming restoration of the "meaning" of subjectivity (through Jameson's discovery of the "meaning" of its products) is but a further reification and defrauding of subjectivity is captured by Adorno: "The concept of meaning involves an objectivity beyond all 'making': as a made thing meaning is already fiction. Meaning duplicates the subject, however collective, and defrauds it of that which it appears to grant."[5]

Jameson's enterprise should be judged in terms of whether he respects the autonomy of cultural artifacts or, alternatively, imposes a direction on them from above. Unfortunately, Jameson has broken off the dialectic of cultural artifacts in the "ideology" of their form. Where is the Jameson who warned in 1969: "The mind tends inevitably towards illusions of its own autonomy, if only because it is impossible to be self-conscious all the time, if only because thought inevitably tends to forget itself and to sink itself in its object."[6] Is not the political unconscious just such an example of thought having forgotten itself in an illusion of autonomy, the usurpation of an autonomy that once belonged precisely to those things that opposed the ubiquity of thought? The political unconscious is not just thought sunk into its object but, more dangerously, subjectivity sunk into itself. It should come as no surprise when, with subjectivity collapsed into itself, one or another impulse of subjectivity is judged genuine, for there is no longer the possibility of some sign which might point away from subjectivity. Jameson continued his warning: "Then there comes into being an illusion of transparency, in which the mind looks like the world, and we stare at concepts as though they were things." He has succumbed to precisely this illusion by transforming both cultural artifacts via the political unconscious into pure transparency. However, subjectivity has a history — it cannot be reduced to an essentialism which posits some utopian desire as genuine so that in turn it can serve as the *a priori* source of all its artifacts and forms of production.

Jameson offers an analysis limited to the symbolic structure of aesthetic

5. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E. B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1979). p. 376 (translation amended).

6. Fredric Jameson, "lntroduction to T. W. Adorno," *Salmagundi* 10-11 (1969-70), p. 142.

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artifacts, which depends on a conflation of symbol and ideology that reduces the former to the latter. He reduces symbol to ideology by presuming Lévi-Strauss as an anthropological authority to make judgments concerning aesthetic phenomena. This analysis, however, is founded on a category mistake: that aesthetic artifacts may have a symbolic component (or, following Jameson, be wholly symbolic) does not warrant the inference that any symbolic artifact is therefore aesthetic. Indeed, a minimal requirement for judging something aesthetic may just be that an artifact exist as something more than a symbol (the premise of Kant's third *Critique*). For Jameson, however, it is the symbolic character of any mode of production that qualifies it as both aesthetic and ideological.

Consider Jameson's conclusion following a discussion of Lévi-Strauss' interpretation of face painting among the Caduveo Indians as the symbolic resolution of social contradictions: "We may suggest that, from this perspective, ideology is not something which informs or invests symbolic production; rather the aesthetic act is itself ideological, and the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal 'solutions' to unresolvable social contradictions."[7] A nagging question here is why Jameson chose Caduveo face painting as an example of aesthetic production. One is tempted to suppose that Caduveo face painting was a ripe candidate for aesthetic analysis because it is a kind of painting and, as everyone should know, painting is an aesthetic activity. And house painting? Perhaps house painters are, after all, agents "with the function of inventing imaginary or formal 'solutions' to unresolvable social contradictions." What if Caduveo face painting is more like house painting than fine arts painting; that is, what if it is not *as* symbolic as Jameson and Lévi-Strauss assume?The referent of symbolic Caduveo face painting as a socially meaningful act is no more inaccessible to the Caduveo than is Lévi-Strauss' interpretation. Although the referent may not be transparent to the Caduveo, there is in principle nothing that bars them from it.

The analogy here for Jameson would be not just to our symbolic production but also, since they are one and the same for him, to aesthetic form — if we understand the social function of symbolic activity we have captured aesthetic form. But this collapse of aesthetic form into symbolic production is hardly justified by Jameson's use of the Caduveo example. He claims that "the aesthetic act is itself ideological"

7. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

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and that "aesthetic. . . form is to be seen. . . with the function of inventing imaginary or formal 'solutions' to unresolvable social contradictons." Yet it does not follow that this ideology or function is aesthetic. Can we not readily grant that the Caduveo activity is symbolic (and ideological), even that its symbolic character has the function of inventing solutions, without being compelled to add that this activity and this function is aesthetic?

Consider an example a little closer to home. Within an analysis of the social function of capital, one can readily admit that autoworkers in Detroit are engaged in two realms of symbolic production, i.e., the production of commodities and, when not selling their labor power, the use of "leisure time" as the symbolic production of a solution to their unresolvable social contradictions. Yet autoworkers are not evidently engaged in aesthetic production in either of these cases. Leisure time might be construed as having one of the features of the aesthetic: an imaginary solution to contradictory social relations. But leisure time does not stand opposed to the social relations it intends, imaginary or not, to resolve. The contemporary industrialization of leisure time and the ease of its susceptibility to colonization by industry reveals the character of leisure time as being no more nor less than that of the symbolic and ideological production that delivers commodities. Hence leisure time is not only populated by commodities but is itself one.

The genuine criterion for judging the aesthetic potential of leisure time in Detroit or of Caduveo face painting is whether the solution, imaginary or not, stands in opposition to unresolvable social relations. But this is precisely what Jameson's conception of aesthetic form as thoroughly ideological cannot allow. In effect he argues that symbolic production is ideological production and we should call them both aesthetic in order to disallow any possibility of some sort of production which might oppose the production of meaning and ideology. This leads to the heart of Jameson's use of "unconscious," and the profound contradiction within any attempt to locate aesthetic production there. If the unconscious is, as Freud asserted, incapable of any negation, it cannot be argued that solutions (which by definition stand opposed to the *status quo*) issue from it. The negativity (read: autonomy) of aesthetic form must have another source.

When Jameson writes that "the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right," he presents the political unconscious as the basis of an ideology production that cannot help but taint all of its products, i.e., narratives, with ideology.

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Or, to put it more strongly, the political unconscious is the source of ideology. Insofar as all symbolic activity is founded within this unconscious, all meaningful activity is ideological, and aesthetic form constitutes the most ideological cultural artifact. At first glance, nothing would be lost by granting this, since it amounts to nothing more than the recognition of what Marcuse called the affirmative character of culture, except that Jameson insists it is form itself which constitutes the ideological character of aesthetic artifacts. It is precisely this characterization of form that marks Jameson's break with Adorno's aesthetics and underpins his refusal to distinguish legitimate art (i.e. , successful according to its own terms, living up to its own concept, aiding the nonidentical, etc.) from illegitimate art. If Jameson argued that it is the content of symbolic artifacts (i.e., meaning) that is necessarily ideological, he would be in agreement with Adorno's analysis of the illusory character of meaning.[8] But his position here leaves unexplained the historical transformations not only of narrative but also within aesthetic form.

The ideological character of aesthetic form is easiest to discern, according to Jameson, in a particularly reified example such as the genre novel. "Genres are essentially literary *institutions*, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact."[9] In the case of genre, it is not then the political unconscious which gives rise to the genre form, at least not in contemporary society. The genre novel is not subject to an unconscious form-giving mechanism but is instead the object of the most explicit social "contract." How then is this particular aesthetic form to be regarded? Since genre narratives are no longer products of unconscious political machinations, what becomes of genre form? To press further, since narrative is generated by the unconscious, can genre novels be construed as narratives at all?

The answers to these questions depend on a willingness to make distinctions between various kinds of aesthetic form. Jameson is unwilling to distinguish reified from nonreified aesthetic form. This is why he cannot substantively distinguish *modernism* from *mass culture.* One is tempted to speculate that the source of this unwillingness lies in a misplaced populism, a desire to legitimate what once was called folk culture by finding utopian impulses within its contemporary, transformed products. But this is truly audacious. Can Jameson really suppose that

8. See Thomas Huhn, "Adorno's Aesthetics of Illusion," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol XLIV, No. 2 (Winter 1985).

9. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

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the reading public, i.e., the marketplace, determines which genre novels it shall read? Is there a contract between the reading public and the publishers?

Adorno's essay, "Lyric Poetry and Society," deals with the same issue as Jameson's book, i.e., an understanding of the sociological content of aesthetic artifacts secured through an investigation of a single reified aesthetic form. Instead of the genre novel, Adorno examines lyric poetry, just as in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* he and Horkheimer examine the epic. In both cases, Adorno's analysis discloses a particular aesthetic form — not as a static, explicit contract, but as an embodiment of cultural contradictions and, more important, as containing within it the transition to a new aesthetic form and a new subjectivity. The *Odyssey* is at once a recapitulation of the birth of subjectivity through domination and a critique of bourgeois subjectivity, which presages the transition to the novel form. The artwork can achieve this transcendence only if its form is distinct from its ideological content.

For Jameson, ideology is simply concealment and delusion reified as form. He penetrates aesthetic form and posits there a legitimate utopian impulse as its originating impetus. There are two objections to this penetration. The first is that the inaccessibility of the Real as agent of history, and History as thing-in-itself, proscribe any speculation of an originating cause that lies behind historical and aesthetic phenomena. The second and (for aesthetic theory) crucial objection is the destruction of aesthetic form as the place where "those things (could) be heard which ideology conceals."[10] Form, as pure ideology, is transparent; but it is this transparency which conceals the very things that form allows to be heard. It is not the sounds of subjectivity, no matter how utopian or legitimate its impulses, which are to be heard in form, but precisely the opposite: the objective sounds of opposition to the contradictions subjectivity has imposed upon itself and nature. For Jameson, ideology is just the obfuscation of some contradiction and its imaginary solution, to which we have no other means of access.

The context of Jameson's account of ideology and form becomes apparent in a dispute with Northrop Frye's conception of the romance genre. Frye understands romance not as the substitution of an ideal for mundane reality, but as the transformation of ordinary reality. Jameson is committed to the conception of any aesthetic form, but especially genre, as wholly artificial. "Frye is therefore not wrong to evoke

10. Theodor W. Adorno, "Lyric Poetry and Society," *Telos* 20 (Summer 1974), p. 58.

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the intimate connection between romance as a mode and the 'natural' imagery of the earthly paradise or the waste land, of the bower of bliss or the enchanted wood. What is misleading is the implication that this 'nature' is in any sense itself a 'natural' rather than a very peculiar and specialized social and historical phenomenon."[11] In other words, what Jameson cannot conceive is the possibiity that aesthetic form is itself the constitution of a second nature, or at least a means for such a constitution. He cannot accede to the implication of Frye's statement that "the quest-romance is the search of the libido or desiring self for a fulfillment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality *but will still contain that reality*."[12] Jameson cannot accept the possibility of a second nature, since it would mean that, within aesthetic artifacts and, by extension, within aesthetic form, the very reality they reject will be both contained and opposed. If aesthetic form were to contain some aspect of the reality it negates, it would no longer be mere artifice or wholly ideological. For Jameson, the unacceptable corollary of Frye's statement is the implication that ordinary life "must already have been conceived, not as some humdrum place of secular contingency and 'normal' existence, but rather as the end product of curse and enchantment, black magic, baleful spells, and ritual desolation."[13] Since Jameson posits normal existence as the given, he cannot help but see the dichotomy of good and evil inscribed in one fashion or another in romance as having no basis nor counterpart in experience.

The central fault of Jameson's book lies in his account of experience and the form of subjectivity. The positing of mundane experience as a given precludes his seeing what Adorno has described as the entwinement of myth and enlightenment. The misunderstanding of the form and history of experience leads him to assert that the twin poles of every aesthetic artifact, ideology and utopia, are in fact simultaneous and profoundly interdependent. This might be put more strongly, even while staying wholly within Jameson's conception: ideology and utopia are inseparable, interchangeable and indistinguishable components of every artwork. They are, in effect, one and the same. The solution to the problem lies in the aporia of art prescribed by the very polarity of utopia and ideology: the utopian can only be expressed within a form that is necessarily ideological, because all ideology contains a genuine utopian impulse.

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11. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
12. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 110. Jameson's italics.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-11.

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The coexistence within the artwork of a utopian impulse and ideology is the solution Jameson offers to the traditional Marxist formulation of the problem of the identity of the artwork: "How is it possible for a cultural text which fulfills a demonstrably ideological function, as a hegemonic work whose formal categories as well as its content secure the legitimation of this or that form of class domination — how is it possible for such a text to embody a properly Utopian impulse, or to resonate a universal value inconsistent with the narrower limits of class privilege which inform its more immediate ideological vocation?"[14] In other words, the traditional formulation asks how it is possible for a text to be both utopian and ideological. The traditional response solves this dilemma inadequately, by depending on the presupposition of liberalism that construes politics (i.e., the utopian impulse) and ideology as secondary and artificial aspects of authentic and primary "private" life. The problem with this solution is that it relegates both politics and ideology to artificiality. Jameson reverses this schema by placing the artificial as primary and then asserting that this artificiality is somehow connected to the Real and History. He does so by first showing the ubiquity of ideology and utopia: "All ideology in the strongest sense, including the most exclusive forms of ruling-class consciousness just as much as that of oppositional or oppressed classes — is in its very nature Utopian."[15] He next argues for the authenticity of ideology, despite its basis in strategic domination: "Even hegemonic or ruling-class culture and ideology are utopian, not in spite of their instrumental function to secure and perpetuate class privilege and power, but rather precisely because that function is also in and of itself the affirmation of collective solidarity."[16] In other words, ideology is authentic because it is the expression of an authentic utopian affirmation of collective solidarity (even though it requires some imagination to view class identity as the product of an impulse toward the collective, rather than the selective). Ideology is inauthentic, however, because it finds expression, takes form only through the political unconscious which transforms it into a symbol.

If all ideology contains a moment of utopia, then there is nothing distinct about the artwork's utopian ideology. The conclusion here is that the artwork is just another artifact of ideology or class consciousness. Although artworks, as Adorno has shown, have an ideological component,

14. *Ibid.*, p. 288.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 291.

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they cannot be reduced to ideology, even the proviso that their ideology is utopian.

Jameson's only hesitation in collapsing the distinction between ideology and utopia, and thus between class identity and collective solidarity (and, finally the distinction between aesthetic form and every other social artifact), is contained in his warning that the utopian impulse is to be read "allegorically" and as a "figure" of a potential future, "concrete" and utopian, collective. But to construe narrative and hence aesthetic form as exhausted by meaning (especially an originary, collective and utopian one) is to treat all aesthetic artifacts as symptoms rather than critical diagnoses of, and potential interventions in, the *status quo*. If all cultural production becomes the symptomatic reproduction of the "progress" of civilization — founded on self-preservation and domination — the concept of culture loses its specificity as that which, minimally, holds in check the barbarism immanent in the movement of civilization. Thus it is no accident that Jameson *affirms* the "allegory" of a collective ideology at the heart of all social production and reproduction of the social. His affirmation is recognition of the loss of the critical function of culture in a false social totality. The purpose of the notion of a political unconscious is to place a socially-affirming motor at the source of the generation of all social and cultural production.

The immanent critique of the project of *The Political Unconscious* can be made by judging the social products and forms that issue from a collectivity-desiring subjectivity. The falsity of this desire is revealed in the necessity of Jameson's use of the term allegory: the "allegorical" character of all manifestations of subjective (especially genuine and utopian) desire is the implicit recognition of a disjunction between desire and its products. That social and aesthetic forms are only a "figure" of the genuine collective desire of subjectivity implies a necessary mis-identity and hence falsehood within subjectivity itself. This mis-identity results not from the clash of something external to subjectivity (e.g., capital, exchange relations, a supposed economy of scarcity, etc.) and subjectivity's utopian impulse, but proceeds rather from the immanent falsehood of a desiring subjectivity as originary source of all production.

The "autonomy" of the aesthetic as nonetheless a category of social and ideological production is the nagging reminder of an alterity within any desiring subjectivity, regardless how genuine, collective and utopian. Kant's figure of the sublime, and that of natural beauty, is the cipher for what exceeds the grasp of subjectivity. Jameson's aesthetics of a political unconscious locates the subject as *the* source of that which

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potentially exceeds it and thereby collapses all production and potential objectivity into the bad infinity of a self-affirming and regressive subjectivism. This effacement of the critical character of aesthetic objects, and thus the denial of the oppositional function of culture *per se*, is effected by Jameson through a recapitulation of the same move that Hegel makes in trying to overcome Kant's aesthetic theory. Hegel's dismissal of any notion of natural beauty is the model, within the history of aesthetic theory, for Jameson's dismissal of all aesthetic artifacts as the fallen expressions of an originary collective subjectivity.

Within two key elements of Adorno's aesthetic theory, Jameson has managed to collapse the dialectic of myth and enlightenment, and to reverse the position where genuine experience may take place. Myth and enlightenment are entwined, but they cannot be reduced to one another; their successive overcoming of each other in aesthetic artifacts is not a mere circularity — something *more* is produced. This does not mean, however, that this *more*, which aesthetic artifacts infer, can be expropriated from the aesthetic realm and placed within social relations or history, nor does it mean that the dialectic of myth and enlightenment outside the aesthetic produces progress. Finally, the *more* that issues from successful artworks does not have its source in subjectivity. The production of the *more* leads Adorno to write that art has an internal history and thus there may be progress in art even where there is none in social relations or anywhere else. Although Adorno would agree with Jameson as to an ideological component within all artworks, he would not locate that component within the form of the artwork but rather in the content which proclaims that it contains meaning. To Adorno it is precisely the form of the artwork which allows the possibility of transcending its ideological content.

Jameson's reduction of aesthetic experience to ideology is best revealed in his comments on the alleged failure of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. He claims that the utopian hermeneutic is "obscured by an embattled commitment to high culture; yet it has not sufficiently been noticed that it has been displaced to the succeeding chapter of that work . . . in which . . . antisemitism is shown to be profoundly Utopian in character, as a form of cultural envy which is at the same time a repressed recognition of the Utopian impulse."[17] The two presuppositions which allow Jameson to reduce art to ideology are: 1) that a utopian impulse within any cultural artifact, aesthetic or not, is evidence

17. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

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of ideology; 2) that an artifact is ideological because it is false in the same way as any other artifact. Both these presuppositions rely on the initial equation of utopia and ideology which depends, in turn, on a mistaken notion of ideology and the contradiction within Jameson's conception of form, hence the impossibility of locating the source of aesthetic form in an unconscious. Ideology is not just falsehood; it contains within itself the possibility of recovering something true. While Jameson allows for something recoverable in his concept of ideology, it is precisely that which is recoverable, the collective impulse, which is false. Social life will not be redeemed through a recovery of a form of social life still based on domination, even though that domination is made transparent by disclosing its impulse toward collectivity. Paradoxically enough, it is precisely Jameson's insertion of a political unconscious at the source of all ideology that serves to eviscerate just that form of subjectivity he wishes to preserve. As Adorno writes: "The more abundantly a universal is equipped with the insignia of the collective subject, the more tracelessly do the subjects disappear within it."[18] Jameson's implicit recognition of the loss of cultural meaning is not only not compensated for by the reassertion of a subjective source of meaning, this very attempt at compensation serves to further ideologize and reify whatever traces of opposition remain within a subjectively constituted culture. The paradox of Kant's aesthetics — of a subjectivity which constitutes itself on the basis of that which it cannot attain — is not resolved by Jameson's assertion of a subjectivity that fills the lack upon which it constitutes itself. What needs to be recovered is not a pre-ideological social life but rather a subjectivity whose relation to nature is nondominating. Genuine social life depends not on a subject whose motives toward other subjects are transparent, i.e., nonideological and nonsymbolic, but on a subjectivity whose mimetic relation to nature is not dominated by fear, which is the more likely candidate for the source of ideology.

Jameson comes surprisingly close to realizing the centrality of fear in ideology-production when he writes that, "Colin Turnbull's description of pygmy society suggests that the culture of prepolitical society organizes itself around the external threat of the nonhuman or of nature, in the form of the rain forest, conceived as the overarching spirit of the world."[19] This "prepolitical" social organization points not to a *political* unconscious as the origin of the desire for the collective, but instead to

18. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, *op. cit.*, p. 338, translation amended.
19. Jameson, "Conclusion" to *The Political Unconscious*, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

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an unconscious that constitutes the desire for the social — as a mechanism of self-preservation — in opposition to the *fear* of an "external threat of the nonhuman or of nature." The political unconscious is the "civilized" heir of this fear. But what if the totality ("the overarching spirit of the world"), against which fear arises and around which "society organizes itself," is itself only a mechanism for legitimating a *social* totality whose own continuation depends, in turn, on the legitimacy of the fear that spawned and sustains it? *The Political Unconscious* is an attempt to provide a rational and enlightened account of the impulse toward the social — an account which thereby serves to legitimate it. The book is an object lesson in the dialectic of myth and enlightenment: in locating the source of the social within a genuine and utopian subjective desire (founded in turn on a supposed legitimate fear of nature, that is, the nonhuman), it "enlightens" the myth of the social by entrenching and extending it. It is not a diagnosis but a symptom of the postmodern condition.

In "Modernity versus Postmodernity" Habermas tries to defend an enlightened project of modernity against the ravages of postmodernity.[20] Yet he cites Peter Bürger and Octavio Paz in asserting that the idea of a rebellious modernity has become obsolete. It is at this point in his reconstruction of the history of modernity that Habermas turns away from Adorno and toward the ends of his own project of communicative rationality. Here he shifts from an analysis of the artwork to an analysis of the intentions and historical and economic forces which gave rise to art's modernist form. His program for reviving the project of modernity is thus not something which arises from modern art but from the intentions of the Enlightenment toward the objectification of science, law, and morality. His criticism of modernity, in particular the modern in art, rests upon a concept of modernity as bearing only an abstract relation to history and tradition. Consider, instead, Adorno's concept of modernity as expressing an emphatic, albeit paradoxical, response to the weight of history and the normative function of tradition: "the concept of tradition, one could almost say of history, of historical change itself, of modernity, contradicts a world of industrial production which is constituted as essentially rational so that one cannot even really imagine that a modernity could exist at all, and this paradox, that after all something like modernity, which from its concept should be ahistorical, is historical."[21] Habermas aligns himself

20. Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," *New German Critique* 22 (Winter 1981).

21. Theodor W. Adorno, unpublished lecture delivered January 4, 1968.

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comfortably on the side of unparadoxical static history by renouncing precisely what is at stake in modernity. Modernity is thus an aberration, and the only question to ask is how we might best overcome it.

The Enlightenment project failed because, along with the increasing autonomy of these separate rationalized spheres of life the promised end of this project, which the Enlightenment thinkers intended, the "enrichment of everyday life" and the "rational organization of everyday social life"[22] have not been attained. It is precisely the lack of success in this area that leads a postmodern mind to destroy the "culture of expertise": a culture composed of separate autonomous spheres, guided by experts, that was to bear fruit for all humanity. For Habermas, this failure can be reversed only if the autonomy of these spheres, and of art in particular, can be held in check and made answerable to subjectivity.

He attributes the failure of the surrealist revolt against autonomous art to two fatal mistakes. "First, when the containers of an autonomously developed cultural sphere are shattered, the contents get dispersed. Nothing remains from a desublimated meaning or a destructured form; an emancipatory effect does not follow."[23] What is striking here is not Habermas' criticism of the surrealist project, but rather the terms of his formulation. Artworks are the containers of an autonomy bestowed by some heteronomous agency. Their autonomy is not, strictly speaking, of their own making. This presupposition fits neatly with Habermas' further criticism: "Their second mistake has more important consequences. In everyday communication, cognitive meanings, moral expectations, subjective expressions and evaluations must relate to one another. Communication processes need a cultural tradition covering all spheres . . . The surrealist revolt would have replaced only one abstraction."[24]

What Habermas calls the second mistake betrays his extreme commitment to the project of Enlightenment, because he ultimately denies the legitimacy of autonomous art for any rationally organized society. Autonomous art turns out to be an aberration. Thus when he turns to the question of alternatives, his answers are already limited to a position that asks only what can be learned from the mistakes of autonomous art. Further, to construe art as a kind of communicative process is to deny from the start its nagging autonomy. But is Habermas' program so very different from what he takes to be that of the surrealists'?[25]

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22. Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," *op. cit.*, p. 9.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
25. For a short but critical evaluation of Habermas' judgment of the "failure" of

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Is not his intention also the destruction of the claim to, and presence of autonomous art? What distinguishes his program from his interpretation of the surrealists' program is that he would negate autonomous art not through an explosion of the irrational, which, as he points out, nonetheless gives autonomous art its due, but rather in an even greater domination by a rationalist subjectivity than the surrealists hoped. If art is to have any role in social organization it must give up its autonomy and allow itself to be controlled by subjectivity. This program implies a didactics hardly distinguishable from social realism. Habermas betrays his misreading of Adorno when he, in reference to Brecht and Benjamin, writes that artworks "which lost their aura, could yet be received in illuminating ways."[26] While he claims to defend the project of modernity, precisely because it is as yet unfulfilled, such a fulfillment would amount to a celebration of a logocentric subjectivity. The ideal of a communicatively rational *culture* thereby becomes the programmatic regression of the critical function of autonomous art to a pre-historical communication based on exchange: "Just as culture sprang up in the marketplace, in the traffic of trade, in communication and negotiation, as something distinct from the immediate struggle for individual self-preservation . . . so culture, considered 'socially necessary' . . . is in the end reduced to that as which it began, to mere communication."[27]

Habermas' elliptical critique of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* finds its substantiation in "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-Reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*." He avoids Adorno's writings on aesthetics and sociology and turns instead to the root of his disagreement — the conception of rationality. He describes what he takes to be the second central thesis of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in the following terms: "Reason itself destroys the humanity which it had made possible in the first place — this far-reaching thesis is substantiated in the first *excursus*, as we have seen, with the argument that the process of enlightenment is from the very beginning dependent on an impulse of self-preservation which mutilates reason because it can only make use of it in the form of purposive-rational domination of nature and instinct, i.e., in the form of instrumental reason. This does not yet prove, however, that reason remains subject to the dictates of purposive-rationality

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surrealism and of his confusion of surrealism and dadaism, see Michael Löwy, *et al.*, "Hermetic Bird: Surrealists' Answer to Jürgen Habermas," *Praxis International*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (January 1987), pp. 503-05.

26. *Ibid.*, p.12.

27. Adorno, *Prisms*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

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even in its *most recent manifestations*, i.e., in modern science, in the universalist conceptions of justice and morality, and in autonomous art."[28] Habermas wants to rehabilitate reason and the path he chooses for this rehabilitation is that of rationality not yet become, or rather freed from instrumentality. Presumably, Horkheimer and Adorno failed to accord to noninstrumental rationality what Habermas calls its dignity: "If one reduces the critique of instrumental reason to this core (i.e., a self-preservation gone wild and reason assimilated to sheer power) it becomes clear why *Dialectic of Enlightenment* flattens out the view of modernity in such an astonishing manner. The dignity specific to cultural modernity consists in what Max Weber has called the stubborn differentiation of value-spheres. In fact, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* does not do justice to the elements of reason in cultural modernity which are contained in . . . bourgeois ideals: . . . I mean the productivity and the liberating force of an aesthetic experience with a subjectivity set free from the imperatives of purposive activity . . . Aesthetic experiences do have *somewhat* of an illuminating effect or at least provide an instructive contrast."[29]

The question as to the dignity accorded to each of the differentiated cultural spheres, art in particular, provides an important arena in which Habermas' concept of rationality can be fruitfully contrasted with Adorno's. Dignity is best understood here as the recognition and self-consciousness of the autonomous character of art. It is thus the affirmation of rationality within an autonomous cultural sphere. But the sphere of art confronts a particular problem when it confronts its own dignity, due to the dynamic and historical nature of the concept of art, and it leads Adorno to write that "today our relation to that erstwhile dignity of art . . . has become ambivalent."[30] Artworks of the past were dignified and displayed a corresponding gravity. But today they can no longer express their gravity through dignity because of the discredit dignity suffered at the hands of, for example, the Wagnerian art religion. "Modern art, on the contrary, that conducted itself with the same level of dignity (as earlier artworks) would be hopelessly ideological."[31]

In Habermas' treatment, bourgeois ideals may have faltered in their elevation of the autonomous character of art beyond the reach of every-

28. Jürgen Habermas, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," *New German Critique* 26 (Spring/Summer 1982), p. 17.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
30. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. by C. Lenhardt (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 57.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 58, translation amended.

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day discourse, but the dignity that adheres to the rational element remains untainted. For Adorno, it is precisely dignity — as the vehicle not only of the legitimate autonomous character of art but also of the illegitimate elevation of subjectivity — that carries the guilt of a repressive subjectivity's deformation of nature. "This is the insight that dignity contains the form of its decadence within itself."[32] Even Schiller recognized the victorious morality-of-the-weaker character of dignity: "True dignity wishes only to rule, not to conceal nature; in false dignity, on the contrary, nature rules the more powerfully within because it is controlled outwardly."[33] Habermas' call for the recognition of the dignity of cultural modernity represents an effort to conceal the paradoxical nature of modernity and the nature of those modernist artworks that oppose subjectivity and its obsolete dignity. Nature, in the guise of subjectivity, rules the more powerfully within, because it asserts that it controls the outward appearance (i.e., the meaning and form) of that very art which denies the dignity of subjectivity. But this very meaningfulness, which Habermas must have from artworks if they are to "illuminate" life and serve as guides for practical organization, maintains the artwork at the level of illusion (*Schein*) and prohibits it from halting the further collapse of history into nature. The expression that issues from and as aesthetic form does not take place through meaning. Habermas' aesthetic attempt to appropriate expression for the practical organization of life should be seen as an attempt by a scientistic reason to dominate nature.

The extent to which Habermas denigrates aesthetic autonomy and equates subjectivity with nonautonomous art is nowhere more evident than in the statement that "the discussion from Kant to Adorno concerning natural and artistic beauty could provide grounds for the thesis that the *expressive attitude* to external nature opens up a domain of experience that can be exploited for *artistic production*."[34] For Adorno, the move from natural to artistic beauty cannot be interpreted as the move from nature to subjectivity, just as for Kant the premise of a judgment of natural beauty is that nature be considered an artifact — a made thing. Natural beauty is itself only possible with a high degree of subjective transformation. For Adorno artistic production, even in its

32. Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. by Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1973), p. 165.

33. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 165.

34. Jürgen Habermas, "A Reply to my Critics," in John B. Thompson and David Held, eds., *Habermas: Critical Debates* (London: McMillan, 1982), p. 249.

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most complete form in early 20th century constructivist works, does not at all represent a movement away from natural beauty. Instead, it is premised upon it. The question is rather to what degree can art, especially autonomous art, survive within subjective artistic production. Hence the validity of Bürger's criticism that Habermas' notion that the differentiation of cultural spheres, i.e., the autonomy of art, moral and legal practices, cannot claim these spheres are autonomous to the same degree or in the same fashion.

Ultimately, Habermas fails to confront the special character of art's autonomy. Following Adorno, this autonomy derives from its refusal to have a function, which cannot be said of the other "autonomous" spheres. Art develops its own concept in a more rigorous and profoundly autonomous fashion. Specifically, art's autonomy arises not just as the product of an increasing social rationalization but rather also as a critical response to it. The autonomy of art is a recapitulation and parody of a social fragmentation that presents itself as a rational progress. Habermas' criticism of art's autonomy is more properly directed against those contradictory social relations that occasioned its development. A more fruitful analysis would be one that examined art's autonomy as a critical reflection of a false social totality rather than one that misguidedly attempts to reintegrate it for the sake of the continued existence of that totality. Adorno's work suggests that the locale for such an analysis would be *within* aesthetic form itself, rather than an attempted expropriation of that locale.

With the bankruptcy of philosophical idealism, Habermas opts for, and indeed cannot avoid the recognition of the legitimacy of plurality. In early 20th century artistic modernism, this plurality was resisted by the constructivist turn that presented artworks as the sole refuge for subjectivity. This refuge character was necessitated by the collapse of subjective idealism. Art thus became the refuge for philosophy. In this sense, it is correct to see *Aesthetic Theory* as a defense of modernism, so long as it is simultaneously recognized as a defense of subjectivity and philosophy. Adorno's hibernation should be understood as a mimetic response to the hibernation of philosophy in art. That philosophy is not forsaken is nowhere more apparent than in Adorno's insistence on the truth content of art and the necessity of philosophy for the completion of art.

Habermas at once embraces and discards the rationality of modern art. He recognizes its rationality only if it is intermingled with and tested by "empirical theories of competence." This underscores his

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reliance on a fundamentally 19th century conception of the form of artworks, especially the sort of narrative coherence antithetical to the fragmentary form of modernist works. He desires, as can be seen in his quarrel with Lyotard, a narrative legitimated by interaction with other narratives and, most importantly, one that does not seek to go beyond itself into meta-narrative. Something of a meta-narrative does emerge, however, in the form and presuppositions of communicative rationality. It is not the product of a unitary and autonomous narrative but the form of narrative in general. It is thus method that generates an object and its legitimacy. This reversal of Adorno's use of method fails to heed his warnings against the inherent positivism of methodology.

Habermas' extreme dislike of postmodernism and his charge that it is neoconservative are the result of postmodernism having taken pluralism to a logical extreme. Postmodernism is a completed pluralism in that it forsakes any and all claims to rationality and responsibility. All historical styles, along with all imagery, are reduced to the level of exchange-value. Yet Habermas too contributes to the erosion of the truth content of the work of art: "As the philosophical discussion of 'artistic truth' reveals, works of art raise claims with regard to their unity (harmony: *Stimmigkeit*), their authenticity, and the success of their expressions by which they can be measured and in terms of which they may fail. For that reason I believe that a pragmatic logic of argumentation is the most appropriate guiding thread through which the 'aesthetic-practical' type of rationality can be differentiated over and against other types of rationality."[35] Here Habermas shifts the truth content away from the artwork and toward propositional logic. That a philosophical discussion can raise the question regarding the truth content of an artwork does not mean that the claims made by an artwork can be adjudicated by that same discussion. If the claims made by an artwork are claims that cannot be made in any other sphere, how can it be appropriate to suppose that it is a sphere other than that of art in which these claims might be judged?

Habermas' answer to this question requires a substantially altered conception of subjectivity in aesthetic experience. This he finds in his reading of the history of the status of subjectivity in the era beginning with romanticism and culminating with surrealism: "What is reflected in these interpretations and declarations is a transformation of the

35. Jürgen Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," in Richard J. Bernstein, ed., *Habermas and Modernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), p. 200.

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form of aesthetic experience, induced by the avant-garde itself, in the direction of the decentering and unbounding of subjectivity. At the same time, this decentering indicates an increased sensitivity to what remains unassimilated in the interpretative achievements of pragmatic, epistemic, and moral mastery of the demands and challenges of everyday situations."[36] Subjectivity is decentered and unbounded while "at the same time" it becomes increasingly sensitive. Subjectivity, in a state of shock induced by the artwork, nonetheless remains in suspension until the shudder subsides, and then proceeds to assimilate that which the shock registered as unassimilable. This description of aesthetic experience and its aftermath fits all too neatly into the very dialectic of enlightenment that the artwork, as the sole refuge, resists. It reduces aesthetic experience to mythic sacrifice. Subjectivity negates itself through the artwork only in order to reconquer itself. Aesthetic experience is thus the vehicle *par excellence* for the domination of nature and self that mythic sacrifice, best exemplified by Odysseus, carries out. Aesthetic artifacts lose their autonomy and become the strategic means of instrumental rationality.

If the core of Adorno's aesthetics is the conception of art as the social antithesis of society, then it becomes clear the extent to which Habermas evades it. If art only affects subjectivity by nudging it off its central position and loosening its bonds, how can art's shock effect be explained? For Habermas, art does not explode subjectivity but politely offers a course in manners. This conception reduces art and aesthetic form to nothing more than a kind of *Bildungsroman.*

36. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

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Simulacral Economies

Vincent P. Pecora

The notion of the simulacrum has played a significant role in recent discussions concerning the "postmodern" condition. In particular, it deflates the autonomous form and subjectivity of high bourgeois modernism. The distinction between high and popular genres is seen to be spurious, since simulation, forgery, "bad copies," and kitsch are highlighted to undermine the idea of an authentic essence traditional aesthetic sensibility supposedly revealed. Nevertheless, the critical potential of simulacra in postmodernism depends on a reification of modernism itself. The concept gives a formal unity, coherence and aesthetic distance to modernism, even as these very attributes are being dismantled from within modernism itself. This in turn means that critics of postmodern culture like Jameson, who wish to expose its shallowness and its complicity with the perceptual requirements of a decentered, rationalized technocracy, are in a rather paradoxical situation. The very aesthetic standard against which the postmodern simulacrum is to be measured and found wanting — the authenticity of modernism's pain, loss and opposition — is itself duplicitous. We find that modernism is already embedded in the trajectory of social rationalization and the proliferation of simulacral images that supposedly account for the emptiness of the postmodern critique. The result is a bankrupt theoretical debate that conspires in the trivialization of social criticism.

In current discussions, simulation is seen both as an active, subversive force and as a pervasive structure of the social environment.[1] Critically

1. See my "Deleuze's Nietzsche and Post-Structuralist Thought" in *Substance* 48 (1986) for a discussion of how Deleuze uses the Heideggerian notion of "difference" in a similar fashion in his *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson (New

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directed at the totalizing conceptions both of traditional philosophy and orthodox Marxian theory, the simulacrum results in a genealogical liberation of signifying economies, in particular those built on dialectical models. In Deleuze's work, especially his *Logique du sens*, the simulacral copy can reveal and disrupt classical modes of rational authentification. The implicitly hierarchical thinking of the classical dialectic does not depend, Deleuze argues, on the progressive approximation of reality by the sign, but on what Foucault simply calls "descent" — the claims of lineage from a founding original. "Philosophy continues to pursue the same goal, iconology, adapting it to the speculative demands of Christianity (the infinitely small and the infinitely large). And always there is the selection from among claimants, the exclusion of the eccentric and divergent, and this in the name of a superior finality, an essential reality, or even a meaning to history."[2]

The turn toward Nietzsche's genealogy, whether in Deleuze's call for the endless, differential play of simulacra or in Foucault's call for the "sacrifice of the subject of knowledge,"[3] is designed to subvert the dialectical models' drive toward totalization. For Deleuze, the production of simulation must be the focus of radical critique as well as of aesthetic and political practice. He wishes to liberate the machinery of desire by unmasking the drive toward an origin or end as a self-validating progress within reason and an image of the imprisonment of the whole within the idea. Thus simulacral economies reveal the false totality of rational society as nothing more than a game of simulation. Reason, from this vantage point, always proceeds by producing one more powerful interpretation of a chimerical text, which Nietzsche called simply "*homo natura*."[4] For Deleuze, the "overthrow of Platonism" means the

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York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1983). In Deleuze's later work, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1969), the simulacrum also plays an equally double role.

2. Gilles Deleuze, "Plato and the Simulacrum," trans. by Rosalind Krauss, *October* 27 (1983), p. 51. On the notion of "descent" ("la provenance") in Foucault, see "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire," *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite* (Paris: P.U.F., 1971): "l'analyse de la provenance permet de dissocier le Moi et de faire pulluler, aux lieux et places de sa synthèse vide, mille événements maintenant perdus" (151-52). Foucault discusses Deleuze's challenge to Platonic hierarchies in "Theatrum Philosophicum," *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 165-196.

3. Foucault, *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite*, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

4. See Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, Werke VIII (Leipzig: Naumann Verlag, 1906), p. 190 (sec. 230). It should be noted that Nietzsche provides ample evidence here that he perceives his task as a philosopher to be the recognition of that eternal basic text (*ewigen Grundtext*) as it exists in itself, apart from subsequent interpretations; that his goal is to retranslate man, to translate man back (*zurückübersetzen*) into nature. This

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triumph of simulacra over the dialectical degradation of copies: "Similarity and resemblance now have as their essence only the condition of being simulated, that is, of expressing the operation of the simulacrum. Selection is no longer possible. The nonhierarchical work is a condensation of coexistences, a simultaneity of events. It is the triumph of the false claimant."[5] Similarly, Foucault's strategies of parodic representation, of the dissolution of identities, and the destruction of the knowing subject by "the injustice proper to the will to knowledge,"[6] all aim at a liberation from the desire for metaphysical, political, and aesthetic closure.

This "simulacral" liberation of signifying economies, this progressive adjudication of sign and reality, has already been achieved by the totalizing power of late capitalist modes of consumption. Baudrillard is representative of a postmodernist cultural critique which reveals the nature of a society of consumption. First, it can absorb a Marxian dialectics designed to wrest control of production from the false universality of the bourgeois class. Second, it appropriates any attempt at decentered, simulated production by recoding itself within a third-order simulation, a "hyperreality." Consequently, Baudrillard can show how an orthodox Marxian dependence on the putative difference between use-value and exchange-value fails because it is ultimately founded on anthropological mystifications like labor, production and need. Capitalist methods of social organization and political economy posit use-value at the moment exchange-value differentiates itself from symbolic exchange. "The legitimacy of production rests on a *petitio principii*; i.e. that people discover *a posteriori* and almost miraculously that they need what is produced and offered at the marketplace (and thus, in order that they should experience this or any particular need, it must already exist inside people as a virtual postulation). Thus it appears that this begging of the question — this forced rationalization — simply masks the internal finality of the order of production."[7]

The idea of capitalist production derives from the empty signifying capacity of notions like "need" or "labor." To accept such notions as real, and to base praxis on the communal liberation of that real, only exacerbates the totalizing hold of political economy. Baudrillard claims

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is contradictory within the larger sweep of Nietzsche's writing. Figures like Deleuze and Foucault, perhaps quite understandably, tend to glide over such issues.

5. Deleuze, "Plato and the Simulacrum," *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.
6. Foucault, *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite*, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
7. Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. by Charles Levin (St. Louis: Telos, 1981), p. 71.

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that Marxian political thought remains trapped and nullified by its very immersion in the analytical tool — political economy — that it hopes to destroy. Use value does not merely guarantee capitalism's continued existence, political economy also progressively elaborates itself in advanced capitalist environments by the increasing play of simulacra that now designate consumer society as the only locus of genuine reality. Thus, celebrating the simulacral as disrupting the dialectician's socio-historical totality is as ineffective as dialectical thought and its claim to negate the distorted social whole. This is the crucial point. In an ever more simulated and manipulated public sphere, the simulacrum already undermines its serviceability for postmodernism as an alternative to the totalizing impulse of the more traditional Marxian critique. In Baudrillard's view, the simulated totality not only harnesses dialectics in support of an ideology of "productive forces" that makes Marxian resistance self-defeating, the society of consumption also harnesses the ostensibly disruptive force of simulacra, using it to redesignate, as if by a doubled reflection, the false totality of consumer society and its simulated relations as the real. Disneyland, for example, may be an "idealized transposition of a contradictory reality." But for Baudrillard, this only conceals that an " 'ideological' blanket serves to cover over a *third-order* simulation. Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the 'real' country, all of 'real' America, which *is* Disneyland. Similarly just as prisons are there to conceal the fact that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, which is carcereal. Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real. In fact, all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation. . . . The Disneyland imaginary is neither true nor false; it is a deterrence machine set up in order to rejuvenate in reverse the fiction of the real."[8]

Baudrillard admits (like Deleuze) that simulation might appear more dangerous to a repressive social apparatus than "real" transgression, since it always suggests "that *law and order themselves might really be nothing more than simulation*."[9] But in the realm of contemporary hyperreality, it is impossible to isolate the "process of simulation" from the "process of the real": "scenarios of deterrence," *third-order* economies of signification, prove theater with anti-theatre, art with anti-

8. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. by Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman (New York: Foreign Agents Series, 1983), p. 25.
9. Baudrillard, *Simulations*, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

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art, psychiatry with anti-psychiatry. "Everything is metamorphosed into its inverse in order to be perpetuated in its purged form."[10] In this sense we are asked to move beyond Deleuze, to forget Foucault. The hyperreality of this totally-simulated society can be broken neither by dialectical negation nor by simulacral play. Indeed, Baudrillard suggests that the only alternative is to return to primal orders of symbolic exchange that destroy production and its ideological mirrors at the same time.[11]

On the contrary, the fundamental problematic of postmodernism has nothing to do with the struggle between a good, politically cogent anti-aesthetic, and a bad, politically coopted anti-aesthetic. As Baudrillard demonstrates, the strategy of playing off these illusory opposites against one another only shows the ability of contemporary culture to purge itself in the service of readier consumption. In this context, the promotion of a subversive anti-aesthetic or of a simulacral art itself accomodates the simulated hegemony. The putatively critical elaboration of simulacral strategies in art objects and in journals functions primarily to cleanse a cultural ecology soiled by an unprecedented explosion of market opportunities in the worlds of art, architecture and publishing. The section devoted to "defiant" fashion in *Art in America* reveals the oxymoronic character of such art. The effective contradiction in postmodern discourse reappears in the terms of the discourse itself. That contradiction is embedded in the nature of the simulacrum and in the inability of an inherently reifying cultural criticism to resolve the basic tension that propels it back and forth, like a shuttle-cock, along pre-determined paths. Such criticism becomes trapped between Deleuze's rehabilitation of the simulacra as the overthrow of Platonism, and Baudrillard's articulation of the hegemony of simulacral economies which reproduce the real not only as the illusory ground of political economy but also as an effect of simulation itself.

When the social apparatus has already done away with the efficacy of dialectical closure, when simulacra, especially in terms of what a willing public desires from a ventriloqual leadership, has already efficiently displaced the real, the power of the simulacrum becomes moot. Pressing all copies into the army of simulation might appear to threaten the laws of representational hierarchy, but in fact it conserves the authority of social relations and fetishizes a reified existence, while embracing

10. Baudrillard, *Simulations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.

11. See Baudrillard's *The Mirror of Production*, trans. by Mark Poster (St. Louis: Telos, 1975), esp. pp. 160-167.

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simulation as the only mode of resistance remaining. The aesthetic fetishization of simulation paradoxically furthers a process inherent in consumer society's power to cloak its lineage in the garb of freedom, choice, difference. The ability of late capitalist culture to disseminate itself in endless constellations of simulation only reinvents an increasingly mechanical administrative apparatus as the locus of the real. The "creative chaos" that Deleuze discerns in simultaneous destruction and copying from within (i.e., Pop Art[12]) becomes indistinguishable from the reinvention of a social body that desires its own automated organization.[13]

This brief history of the simulacrum and its duplicitous place in postmodernism is meant to provide a framework for discussing the significance that postmodernism attaches to the relation between high art and popular art in contemporary society. Whether popular culture is understood to hold the promise of subverting the reified hierarchies of representation of bourgeois high art, or whether popular art is seen as stemming from reproducing the false totality of advanced capitalism in mass-produced entertainment leading once again to a fetishization of high art, the role of the simulacrum controls. Any attempt to use popular culture as a subversive instrument must confront the inherently duplicitous nature of simulation. Whether high art incorporates popular forms, as in Lichtenstein's works, or popular practices simulate high art, or whether popular art is used to reveal conflicts or values elided by the opacity of high art (as in ostensibly critical but worshipful analyses of jazz, boxing and television) in each case, an apparently critical aesthetic works only by suppressing the inherent discrepancy within simulacral strategies.

But how to account for the enormous currency of simulacral economies among critics who hope to maintain a viable adversarial stance *vis-à- vis* rational society and the culture industry? Since the publication of Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, a critical literature has proliferated with alarming efficiency within the self-referential, internally-organized debate over postmodernism. Indeed, the gap between

12. Deleuze, "Plato and the Simulacrum," *op. cit.*, p. 56.

13. Baudrillard, *Simulations*, *op. cit.*, p. 35. The pr·.nary statement of a deterritorialized desire is found perhaps in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen Lane (New York: Viking Press, 1977). For a more recent example, see their *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. by Dana Polan (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986): "Writing for Kafka, the primacy of writing, signifies only one thing: not a form of literature alone, the enunciation forms a unity with desire, beyond laws, states, regimes. Yet the enunciation is always historical, political, and social. A micropolitics, a politics of desire that questions all situations" (pp. 41-42).

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cultural production and the formation of a complementary intellectual hegemony — complete with all sorts of aesthetic dissension and ostensibly oppositional camps — has narrowed to that Adornian point when theory "drones . . . from the gears of an irresistible praxis." Such work becomes indistinguishable from the sphere of fashion it claims to denounce. Clearly, there is a real liability in continuing the discussion.[14]

In a recent discussion of this issue, Jameson argues that "this whole global, yet American, postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world: in this sense, as throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood, torture, death and horror."[15] The proliferation of simulacral phenomena, the "new depthlessness" both of theory and aesthetic image, is presumably one of the constitutive features of a multinational phase of capitalist development. Jameson is right about a new American military fervor, and about the power of transnational, monopolistic capitalism. In this he provides a much needed outline of the socio-economic bases of contemporary cultural production. But there are problems in his model of cultural reflection. The notion of a totalizing, multinational economic organization contradicts his idea of unilateral military or economic might. One could easily imagine a conflict erupting precisely because global, rationalized economic interests do not necessarily match up with the more paranoid aims of American geopolitics.

In terms of the present discussion, Jameson's analysis, however much it identifies the centrality of the simulacrum in postmodernism, never adequately confronts the duplicities of that notion. He analyses postmodernism as a mere "superstructural expression," in that every theoretical position *vis-à-vis* postmodernism is at the same time necessarily a political stance toward multinational capitalism. Postmodern aesthetic techniques of the simulacral (e.g. Duane Hanson's sculptural derealization of the everyday world) pose a hermeneutic dilemma: "But is this now a terrifying or an exhilarating experience?"[16] This confusion about the status of a critical stance within art is the crucial question. It is the hopelessly doubled nature of derealization itself that is most important, rather than the "waning of the affect" that Jameson

14. *New German Critique* 22 (Winter 1981), and 33 (Fall 1984); *Telos* 62 (Winter 1984-85); and *Cultural Critique* 5 (Winter 1986-87) are devoted to the postmodernism debate and provide useful overviews of the terrain.

15. Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (1984), p.57.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

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links to depthlessness. He laments that "we are condemned to seek History by way of our own pop images and simulacra of that history, which itself remains forever out of reach,"[17] but in many ways this only begs the question, trivializing a crucial discrepancy. For Deleuze and Foucault, continuing "to seek History" reinforces the false totality and closure of rational society. As for Baudrillard, both dialectical History and its simulacral dissemination are doomed to further "a panic-stricken production of the real and the referential."[18]

Nevertheless, in the context of the question of high versus popular art, several points can be made. In the *Theory of the Novel*, Lukács indicates the peculiar phenomenon of the simulacrum in Romantic and post-Romantic aesthetic developments. The novel is a form built by ironically exposing its own incommensurability with the whole. Its utopian dimension is never pre-given but is itself implicit in its formal construction, revealing a determinant "ethical intention" with significant side effects. In contrast to other genres, whose forms entail completedness, the novel is something in the process of becoming. Unlike other genres it has a caricatural twin almost indistinguishable from itself. Thus the entertainment novel has all the outward features of the novel and is bound to nothing and based on nothing: it is entirely meaningless. Other completed genres can have no caricatural twin because the extra-artistic element cannot be disguised. However, because of the hidden nature of ideas in the novel, a superficial likeness can lead to a caricature being mistaken for the real thing.[19]

The situation Lukács delineates for the novel has a wider applicability to aesthetic production in 19th and 20th century bourgeois society. The production of caricatural twins is an important component of the post-Romantic fetishization of the art object. Benjamin's discussion[18] of the spread of culture among the masses to solidify bourgeois hegemony depicts an age of mechanical reproduction driven by the mass desire for "proximity."[20] Anyone can hang a cheap print of a master on the wall. However, in Lukács's analysis of the novel the caricatural in high bourgeois culture pre-dates purely mechanical transformations of perception; it is implied in the alienated quality of Kantian aesthetic judgment. From that point onward, all that fails to meet the formal

17. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
18. Baudrillard, *Simulations*, *op. cit.*, p. 13 and 35.
19. Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. by Anna Bostock (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), p. 73.
20. See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Publishers, 1978).

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standards of the aesthetic in-itself is disprivileged as entertainment. As Trilling noted, pleasure is one of Romanticism's victims;[21] it is also one of modernism's ghosts.[22]

Lukács indicates why, for the bourgeois era, popular forms of art necessarily begin to lose the anti-authoritarian, non-hierarchical political force that once was associated with them. Consider, for example, Bakhtin's notions of the "*carnivalesque*." In a world from which immanent meaning has vanished, high art necessarily acquires the superficial appearance of empty animation. The ethical intent present in aesthetic form that increasingly reveals the disparity between true and real make the production of simulacral versions of high art all the more likely. The ideological function of the bourgeois notion of ethical intent involved a transcendence of class boundaries to solidify false universality. Consequently, existing popular forms will cease to possess class-based social functions. Henceforth, popular art will retain value only as caricature and simulacrum. In the bourgeois age, high culture and popular culture, while remaining operationally distinct, will come to form two sides of the same signifying coin. They will increasingly rely on each other to ratify the continuing power and value of aesthetic truth, on the one hand, and a liberal-democratic ideology that transcends class-based genres, on the other.[23]

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21. Lionel Trilling, "The Fate of Pleasure" in *Beyond Culture* (New York: HBJ, 1965), pp. 50-76.

22. In this regard, see Tony Tanner's *Adultery in the Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1979). For Emma Bovary, the transgressive freedom of adultery only produces a second order dehumanization, "a retroactive revalidation of the state of marriage" (p. 367) In effect, the simulacral duplicity of uniform and averaged commodity values implicitly denies the pleasures of transgression. And the result, as the trial of Madame Bovary shows, is that the collapsing difference between high, moral art and popular titillation or (to reverse the coin) the difference between subversive, corrupting art and popular morality, produces not only "legal" confusion, but also simulacral versions of an unlocalizable aesthetic argument.

23. Jameson himself makes a related point about the link between high modernism and popular culture in "The Politics of Theory," *New German Critique* 33 (Fall 1984): "Indeed, it can be argued that the emergence of high modernism is itself contemporaneous with the first great expansion of a recognizable mass culture (Zola may be taken as the marker for the last coexistence of the art novel and the bestseller to be within a single text)" (p. 64). Similarly, Andreas Huyssen in "Adorno in Reverse," *New German Critique*, 29 (Spring/Summer 1983), argues that: ". . . modernism itself is held hostage by the culture industry and . . . theories of modernism neglecting this conjuncture are seriously deficient" (p. 37). My point in elaborating upon Lukács is to note that the dialectical relation of "high" to "popular" art is very clearly an economic and political necessity of the rise of bourgeois capitalism itself; it is not at all just "high modernism" that is held hostage here. More importantly, the dialectic of high and popular forms does not show modernism to be as coherent or as "authentic" as Jameson would seem to imagine.

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High modernism never had firm possession of the affective pathos ascribed to it. Two recent discussions of this issue by Bürger and Berman[24] are relevant here. Both are sensitive to the dilemmas being raised, except in their formulation of modernism. Bürger correctly sees a dialectical continuity in 20th century aesthetics and tries to create a synthesis between autonomous high modernism and the avant-garde movements which attacked the bourgeois separation of art from life. But Bürger remains committed to certain "essential categories"[25] within modernism, for example, "the modern conception of artistic form."[26] Following Adorno, he grants modern art a univocal coherence despite its almost immediate disinterpretation. Adorno's claim for high modernism — that the modern artist "is pledged to a subjectivity under conditions which are ever more unfavorable to the development of individuality"[27] produced a conformist aesthetic no longer acceptable. Bürger, nonetheless, maintains that postmodern "historical eclecticism" has forsaken modernism's pledge.

Though Berman emphasizes the contribution of modernism's "desublimation" of aesthetics to the aestheticization of society — a process he sees as exacerbated in postmodernism — he nevertheless wants to preserve an "aesthetic revolution"[28] in modern art, calling for a definitive break with liberal bourgeois culture. Thus Joyce can produce an "aesthetic impulse" that liberates itself from the autonomy of traditional bourgeois art, becoming "a constituent moment of erotic beauty in lived experience."[29] This is, however, a fictitious modernism — one that never actually decayed because it never actually existed. Much of modernism is already trapped in the rationalized administration of its own aesthetic impulse. Such modernism is in practice neither pledged to autonomous subjectivity nor to a genuine model of desublimation. The modernist critique of the bourgeoisie is therefore, at the moment of its articulation, already an image of the "capitulation of the individual."[30] Modern art's break with older bourgeois forms, where

24. See Peter Bürger, "The Decline of the Modern Age," *Telos* 62 (Fall 1984-85), pp. 117-130 and Russell A. Berman, "Modern Art and Desublimation," *Telos* 62 (Fall 1984-85), pp. 31-57. For an extended discussion of the utopia/ideology dialectic in Jameson, see the final chapter of *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 281-299.
25. Bürger, "The Decline of the Modern Age," *op. cit.*, p. 127.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
28. Berman, "Modern Art and Desublimation," *op. cit.*, p. 34.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

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it occurs, lies in its demystification of the ironic, melancholy depth — an invention of the 19th century — out of which bourgeois art's *promesse de bonheur* had emerged. Thus Berman's call for a "defense of authenticity"[31] is attractive, but was already anachronistic at the outset of modernism.

Even the neat duality of ideological and utopian content that Jameson, borrowing from Adorno, discovers as the formal grounding of modernism is unstable. He notes the fascination of postmodern works with degraded popular forms like advertising, paraliterature and murder mysteries. Such materials, he argues, "no longer simply 'quote,' as a Joyce or a Mahler might have done, but incorporate into their very substance."[32] However, both Joyce and Mahler go beyond quotation when they derive form-giving principles from the popular media. The ideological significance of this blurred and shifting relation to popular culture in high modernism has been a tortuous and critical issue. As Moretti has shown, "The mutual indifference of cultural values and expressive techniques, the multiplication and equivalence of ideological fashions, the false freedom of choice: the substance of *Ulysses* is the substance of the contemporary cultural system."[33] Modernism is clearly fascinated by the simulacral tendencies its reflexive procedures promote. The authentic, if desperate, utopian moment within modernism is profoundly equivocal and has already begun to reproduce itself as a reified component of authoritarian social relations. In spite of his attachment to the utopian possibilities of modernism's concern for formal integrity, Adorno often demonstrated that modern subjectivity's appeal to authenticity simultaneously involves its own usurpation: ". . . such concentration on substance which is absolutely one's own, the greatest example of which is to be found in the poetry and theoretical writings of Paul Valéry, contributes at the same time to the impoverishment of that substance."[34] The simulacral demystification of that substance, present as a constitutive formal strategy in modernism, makes the utopian promise of modernist art problematic in ways that prefigure the "depthlessness" of postmodern culture. In this context, one could examine Adorno's analysis of a modernist "anti-psychologism," which has "long since been socialized and made serviceable

31. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
32. Jameson, "Postmodernism," *op. cit.*, p. 55.
33. Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders*, trans. by Susan Fischer, David Forgacs, and David Miller (London: Verso, 1983), p. 208.
34. Theodor Adorno, "Cultural Criticism and Society," *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), p. 23.

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to the *status quo*."[35] Adorno concludes: "One cannot say in general whether somebody who excises all expression is a mouthpiece of reification. He may also be a mouthpiece for a genuine non-linguistic, expressionless expression and denounce reification."[36] The duplicities of the simulacrum in postmodernism could not be articulated more clearly.

Nonetheless, the idea of popular culture is itself a Romantic invention logically implied in the fetishized autonomy of high art. Popular art preserves within it older, auratic, irrational notions of ritual and pleasure that high bourgeois art contains only as rationalized moments. As the fairy tale becomes for Benjamin the last vestige of epic storytelling left to bourgeois culture, so popular aesthetic forms become the nostalgic "dying beauty" perennially sought within the increasingly empty shells of high art.[37] This longing for an aesthetic that has not been rationalized is appropriated and becomes a primary tool in the hegemony of the culture industry. The popular serves as "an underworld which has long since ceased to find expression, and now only lives on what is handed down to it from above."[38] But this simulacralization of the primitive and the popular, which makes it an exchange value in the late capitalist rationalization of entertainment, inevitably alienates aesthetic perception at large. Culture, including high culture, is routinely transfigured into cultural value. It is this abstract, fetishized value that is consumed.[39] The committed refusal of "refined entertainment" by the serious practitioner increasingly leads to what Adorno called an "iron discipline," a "barbarism of perfection."[40]

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35. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. by C. Lenhardt (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 169-172.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

37. See Benjamin's "The Storyteller," *Illuminations*, *op. cit.*, esp. p. 102.

38. Theodor Adorno, "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening," *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt eds. (New York: Continuum, 1983), p. 275.

39. It is just this simulation of the "primitive" or "natural" that Baudrillard emphasizes in the opening pages of *Simulations*, where he recounts the attempt of the Filipino government — at the instigation of anthropologists — to reinstall a tribal group in the jungle from which anthropology had taken it: "Ethnology almost met a paradoxical death that day in 1971 when a Filipino government decided to return the few dozen Tasaday discovered deep in the jungle, where they had lived for eight centuries undisturbed by the rest of mankind, to their primitive state, out of reach of colonists, tourists and ethnologists" (p. 13). The necessity to reinvent the "real" on the part of the human sciences thus becomes inseparable for Baudrillard from the desire to strip it of its mystifying cloaks.

40. Adorno, "On the Fetish Character in Music," *op. cit.*, p. 284.

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Adorno arrives at a formulation essential for Baudrillard's critique some 30 years later. If, in commodity exchange, "cultural goods" seem an exception, precisely this unique appearance "gives cultural goods their exchange value."[41] Accordingly, culture itself becomes the purest of commodity forms. "The appearance of immediacy is as strong as the compulsion of exchange-value is inexorable. The social compact harmonizes the contradiction. The appearance of immediacy takes possession of the mediated, exchange-value itself. If the commodity in general combines exchange-value and use-value, then pure use-value, whose illusion the cultural goods must preserve in completely capitalist society, must be replaced by pure exchange-value, which precisely in its capacity as exchange-value deceptively takes over the function of use-value. The specific fetish character of music lies in this *quid pro quo*. . . . The more inexorably the principle of exchange-value destroys use-values for human beings, the more deeply does exchange-value disguise itself as the object of enjoyment. . . . The appearance of exchange-value in commodities has taken on a specific cohesive function."[42]

Nevertheless, Adorno and Baurdrillard have very different ideas. Adorno for example attempts to maintain a notion of subjectivity that, while participating in the mystifications of bourgeois autonomy, nevertheless allows progressive criticism to decry the nature of its distortions and contradictions, preserving a space within which suffering or liberation would still have meaning. Baudrillard at times resorts to a wholesale flight into the very symbolic primitivism that his own method seems to preclude. But a more important issue needs to be raised here: if the problematic of the simulacral is already seen by Adorno in 1938, if modern culture and the difficulties it raises for progressive critique are already implicated in the simulacral economies that proliferate in postmodern theory, what happens to the neat periodization Jameson adopts from Mandel that stresses a "third phase" of multinational or consumer capitalism behind the "depthlessness" of postmodern culture?[43] There may be a distinction between phases of capitalist development, but the reductive elaboration of the simulacrum in postmodern aesthetics glides over a crucial, and politically disturbing component of modernism.

Modernism's utopian moment is as often as not indistinguishable

41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
43. Jameson, "Postmodernism," *op. cit.*, p. 78.

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from the fascism that later rejects modernist aesthetics as decadent. Jameson registers this utopian duplicity but does not articulate it. In a paragraph on modernism's fascination with the machine, he refers with apparent equanimity to the "exhilaration of futurism . . . Marinetti's celebration of the machine gun . . . Le Corbusier's buildings, vast Utopian structures . . . the ways in which revolutionary or communist artists of the 1930s also sought to reappropriate this excitement of machine energy for a Promethean reconstruction of human society as a whole. . . ."[44] His point is that the present phase of computer technology no longer supplies the "productive" models that fueled utopian fascination, that it "no longer possesses the same capacity for representation."[45] Adorno's analysis of the fetish character of music in the 1930's denies the validity of any such schematization. But Jameson is surely aware of a more troubling question. The reductive emphasis on the relation between a technological mode and a specific capacity for representation obscures crucial features of the mechanical utopia — most obviously in figures like Marinetti[46] — that makes even overtly progressive appropriations of the machine problematical.

Adorno's and Horkheimer's critique of instrumental reason would indicate that Le Corbusier's "vast Utopian structures" may unwittingly participate in the false totalities organizing the modern state. Even the negatively projected utopian content of high modernist art had already begun to reproduce simulacral economies. This would deny postmodernism's reduction of modernism to fetishized, late-Romantic metaphysics, and at the same time undercut any critique of postmodern culture that sees in it the abandonment of a non-contradictory utopian moment within modernism. For Adorno, listening had regressed by 1938. Already the immanently utopian pleasure of classical form was indistinguishable from the artificial dynamism of Toscanini, or from a "barbarism of perfection." Even the negative indication of utopian harmony by the stringently, rationalized serial forms of Schoenberg would be available only to those still able to hear. How, then, can criticism identify any kind of clear shift to the regressive, depthless, politically empty codes of the postmodern era?

What remains is a bankrupt debate. Nevertheless several things might be learned. No account of postmodernism can be undertaken without

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
46. See especially Benjamin's epilogue to "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-42.

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recognizing the prevailing tendency of bourgeois capitalist culture to make fleeting pleasure a use-value and thereby recreate it as pure exchange-value. This is the meaning of Flaubert, Lukács and Adorno as much as the distorted reflection (in the work of Deleuze, Foucault and Baudrillard) of a multinational phase of capitalist devlopment. All cultural goods — high or popular — marketed in advanced capitalist economies participate in this tendency though in different modalities. As a result, the pleasure of the text has become the *jouissance* of reified response. When it tries to isolate an adequate form of aesthetic resistance, criticism ignores this phenomenon to its own detriment. A dynamic Marxian perspective would resist the urge to collapse cultural reproduction into seemingly obvious phases of economic or technical production. The prevailing pragmatism of consumer society already demands the collapse of theory into praxis in ways that, borrowing again from Adorno, turn the notion of ideology into an intellectual straitjacket: "No notion dares to be conceived any more which does not cheerfully include, in all camps, explicit instructions as to who its beneficiaries are — exactly what the polemics once sought to expose. But the unideological thought is that which does not permit itself to be reduced to 'operational terms' and instead strives solely to help the things themselves to that articulation from which they are otherwise cut off by the prevailing language."[47] Under present conditions, the "intransigence" of dialectical thought must be directed against the reified forms of critical analysis itself. If the above demonstrates anything, it is that the postmodernist discourse at this point articulates very little.

Criticism should look to the consequences of pursuing a debate over a postmodern aesthetics, whose terms obscure modernism's prior and not necessarily progressive dismantling of such notions as authenticity, autonomy and pathos. Even Adorno's ideal — an immanent aesthetic criticism — may at this point entail an illusory comfort in modern art's ability to simulate a utopian or anticipatory force within an increasingly rationalized society. Criticism needs to acknowledge that postmodern depthlessness is a crucial component of bourgeois modernism's own vain encounter with the demands of integrated social relations. Art in bourgeois culture, from the moment of its 19th century institutionalization, is at bottom always a simulacrum of now idealized ends. Criticism, attentive both to these broader economic tendencies (admittedly legible only from a transcendent social position) and to the

47. Adorno, "Cultural Criticism and Society," *Prisms*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

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contradictions in immanent, specific cultural products, should be capable of seeing the implicit genealogy of an ostensibly new simulacral aesthetic. It runs from Picasso to Duchamp, to Johns and Warhol, from Joyce to Beckett and Barthelme, from the analytic impersonality of surrealism to the rationalizations of minimalism, from a self-consciously international style to the designer or corporate signature, from the jargon of the genuine in Lawrence, from Hemingway and existentialism to the whole affinity for kitsch, the schlock mass-production of postmodernism. Criticism should also recognize the inescapable participation of every contemporary anti-aesthetic in the reproduction of pleasure as pure commodity value. Indeed, critique should abandon the debate over postmodernism. In the end, it merely provides an imprimatur for the culture industry in its elite, Soho-gallery venues and Madison Avenue suites.

Perhaps in renouncing this debate, criticism can allow what remains unarticulated in simulacral aesthetic economies to speak in some human, unreified way. In refusing to abandon a specific analysis of several generations of cultural production, criticism, as Benjamin suggests, can hope to brush that production against the grain and in the process bring to light what has been repressed in the canonized works of the art and entertainment market, as well as works excluded or hidden by the culture industry's economic strictures. Thinking dooms itself in advance when in its own practice it adopts the terms of the very reified culture industry it wishes to undo.

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A Difficult Transition to Democracy

Juan Corradi

The election of Raul Alfonsín to the presidency in 1983 marked not the end of a democratic transition, but its inception. It was not an episode in the normal functioning of a new political regime, but the first step towards its construction. Five years later, this process is far from over. Democracy remains a fragile and precarious rehearsal, a goal that has yet to be reached. In order to understand its frailty, it is necessary to review, if only briefly, the specific features of the political process from 1983 to the present against a background of sociological and economic constraints.

The change from an authoritarian military regime to a civilian one was abrupt and not negotiated. After the disastrous adventure in the Falklands war, the military government imploded. The tottering dictatorship barely had time to prepare general elections and hope that the successor civilian regime could be timid enough, or corruptible enough, not to seek justice and compensation from the armed forces. From this perspective, Peronism was their best bet. The triumph of Alfonsin, in whose campaign the denunciation of a pact between the Peronist unions and the military loomed large, was an unpleasant surprise to the officers. Henceforth, the isolation of the military from the majority of civil society would only grow. Far from adapting to the new democratic conditions, the armed forces turned their back on civil society, closed ranks in a rigid defense of their interests, and vindicated their past actions (notably the "dirty war" — with a mixture of resent ment and patriotic melancholy. In so doing, they cut off their noses

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to spite their faces — the executive branch of government, and Alfonsín in particular, had made clear overtures of reconciliation.

Alfonsín's offer was this: to give the armed forces the opportunity to purge themselves of the most notorious leaders of the repression, by bringing them to trial before the highest military court, but saving the institution from the embarrassment of a more widespread civilian prosecution. The armed forces refused the deal, perhaps from fear that a self-purge would exacerbate internal dissent and inter-service rivalries, from a lack of familiarity with, and hence trust of, Alfonsín and the *Radicales*, and from a sense of indiscriminate siege in which it was hard to distinguish Alfonsín's overtures from more strident calls for justice, if not revenge, on the part of human rights organizations, the media, and public opinion at large. This obstinacy of the armed forces delivered them to a fate worse than that envisioned by the President: it put the armed forces at the mercy of the judiciary, which proved its independence from other branches of government and from the parties. In consequence, not only the chiefs of the military juntas, but also many other officers of lesser rank, would be questioned, arraigned, indicted, and brought to trial. It became increasingly clear that the very legitimacy of the armed forces as an institution would be at stake, that prosecutions would increase in scope and duration, and that the gulf separating the military from civilians would widen. Henceforth, the President would attempt, repeatedly but unsuccessfully, to "contain" the damage done to the armed forces by proposing legislation aimed at preventing the proliferation of prosecutions, by limiting them in time (none beyond a certain date) and in rank (none below a certain rank). The courts, nevertheless, found ways around these barriers decreed by the executive or legislated by congress. As a result, isolation and resentment increased within the armed forces, and peaked in the open rebellion of younger officers in several garrisons during the Holy Week of 1987.[1]

This precipitated a crisis, at the end of which Alfonsín was forced to concede what, before the crisis, he had offered freely but could not obtain without the help of the other branches of government, namely, the laws of "*punto final*" and "*obediencia debida*." These now seemed the product, not of political foresight and expedience but of armed blackmail and duress. This military crisis, plus the deteriorating economic

1. Cf. Isidoro Cheresky, "Argentina: A Blackmailed Democracy" in this issue of *Telos*.

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situation, exacted a heavy political price from Alfonsín and the Radical Party: they led to their defeat in the congressional and provincial elections of September 6, 1987.[2]

The military crisis and the electoral defeat of 1987 marked the limits of the style of government practiced by the Alfonsín administration since its inauguration in 1983 and thus closed the first chapter of the democratic transition on a note of ambiguity. The twin episodes exposed the persistent lack of articulation between the state, the parties, and the powerful interest groups that compose Argentine society. Without some form of articulation, and in the absence of a viable model of economic growth,[3] it is hard to envisage the final consolidation of democracy. Until 1987, the Alfonsín administration devoted its efforts almost exclusively to installing and protecting the rules of the game and the identity of a democratic regime. But it failed to undergird this legal and ethical superstructure with a solid web of coalitions between social and economic groups.

With the benefit of hindsight, the presidential elections of 1983, which brought Alfonsín to power, now appear as an expression of values rather than of interests: they expressed the collective will to leave behind the violence and repression, to uphold the constitution, to civilize politics. They were about ethics and political style, not about programs and dividends. In this sense, they marked a clean break with the past — not only with the preceding military regime but also with Peronism and a long tradition of populist politics. The winning *Unión Civica Radical* was the oldest party of the republic and the one that fitted best the communal desire to place ethics and law above the selfish interests, authoritarian experiments and messianic mass movements that had dominated Argentine politics for decades. In assuming this mandate,[4]

2. In the election for the national chamber of deputies, which is renewed by halves every two years, the Peronists and the center parties gained and wrested control from Alfonsín's party. In the elections for provincial governors, the results were even more impressive: 17 out of 22 provinces now have Peronist governors.

3. Recent and ongoing studies on the redistribution of economic power and the occupational structure of Argentina strongly suggest that the dominant modes of accumulation, based on agrarian exports and industrial substitution of imports, are exhausted. Accumulation has declined and fragmented. Capital circulates in the financial sector and flows abroad. There is little new investment, and a new mode of development has not yet emerged. The social structure is increasingly amorphous. Cf. D. Azpiazu, et al., *El nuevo poder económico* (Buenos Aires: Nueva información, 1987), and Susana Torrado, *La estructura social argentina: 1945-1983*, forthcoming.

4. Alfonsín's vision is expressed very clearly in a long interview published recently: Pablo Giussani, *¿Por qué, doctor Alfonsín?*, (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana/Planeta, 1987).

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Alfonsín attained national and international stature as a leader. In short, his election seemed to announce the strong revival of classical liberal institutions: the constitution, the rule of law, congress, political parties, an informed and mature citizenry. The initial euphoria clouded, however, the perception of a different and deeper reality and spawned a number of illusions.

The first illusion was to think that the establishment of a democratic regime suffices to solve social and economic problems. It does not, for it underestimates the effective presence in a modern society of corporate groups: the unions, the military, the Church, industrial, financial and agrarian business groups. It is not possible to govern based solely on the strength of an electoral majority desirous of peace and legality, for in the absence of lasting pacts with the main organized interest groups, beset by weak parties and a weak parliamentary tradition, the government becomes isolated and its original mandate may prove, after all, to be based on a fleeting state of opinion. The second illusion was to think that Peronism was in irreversible decline after its defeat in 1983. This *misprision* fueled another, subsidiary fantasy, namely, that the *Radicales* could become hegemonic and Alfonsín the head of a new national movement that would dominate Argentine politics for years to come. Aside from being in error, that vision had another fault: it was itself incompatible with true modern democracy.

What emerged in 1983 was an incipient bipartisan system — a lesson that the *Radicales* finally learned, at their own expense, in 1987. Democracy was installed as an expression of ultimate collective values, signifying the common wishes of abstract citizens. Its consolidation hinged on the capacity of the emerging party system to regroup and articulate the routine demands of organized citizens. As the first government of the transition, Alfonsín's administration had to perform on both levels: guarantee and promote the state of law, and deal with organized interests. It now appears that the government preferred the first task to the second, favored abstract values over concrete interests, governed from above, based on the initial mandate of elections, disliked negotiating with established organizations, and was reluctant to consider the *Peronistas* as valid rivals and interlocutors. As a result, the main projects of the government have had a remote unnegotiated ring attached to them: investigation of repression under preceding military regimes, reform of the state and the constitution, the plan to move the capital from Buenos Aires to Patagonia, a stronger moral and diplomatic presence in the international arena, and other legislative or adminis-

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trative initiatives, many commendable but most external to the short- and medium-term calculations and interactions of the organizations and elites of civil society. In economic matters, after an initial poor performance and a tactic of confrontation with international creditors, and on the verge of chaos, in 1985 the Alfonsín administration installed a new economic team which put into effect an intelligent and technically proficient stabilization program known as the *Plan Austral*, the social and political basis of which, however, was very tenuous indeed. In the end it was a government of liberal notables, intellectuals and technocrats hatching projects, ideals, and illusions but also facing staggering problems, like the external debt, the absence of investments, the uncertain position of the country in the world economy, and the progressive decadence of older modes of accumulation without viable alternatives in sight.

Meanwhile, a separate and disparate reality composed of the unions, the armed forces, the Church, and business groups, has exercised increasing pressure and begun to impose conditions from the outside.[5] What has been missing all along is a fluid connection between interest groups, political parties, parliament, and the administration. Without a series of compacts and understandings between these various elements, the political system remains unstable, because social demands cannot be filtered through the institutions, competing programs cannot be grouped and sorted out, policies cannot be implemented, and the citizenry is confused about the boundaries of consensus and disagreement, that is, about what should be an effort in common, on the one hand, and an area of legitimate political competition, on the other. Under these conditions, societal power remains fragmented and tends to accumulate outside institutions. At the bottom, civil society is a plurality of strong but uncoordinated interests. At the top, the state is

5. The Argentine Church exemplifies the amibivalence of powerful pressure groups towards the incipient democracy. As opposed to the case of Spain, where there was a steady erosion of Church influence over civil society since the days of Franco, in Argentina the Church rapidly increased its influence during the years of the military dictatorship. The abrupt transition to democracy caught it unprepared to engage in subtle negotiations. Democracy elicits fears among the clergy that they may have to surrender a portion of cultural power. As a result, the Church has often resorted to fear-mongering tactics in order to forestall the passage of progressive legislation in some sensitive areas, like divorce, abortion, and education. It has also meddled in the arts and the media with anti-democratic undertones. On the behavior of other corporate organizations, like unions and business associations, see José Nun and Juan Carlos Portantiero, eds., *Ensayos sobre la transición democrática en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Puntosur, 1987), esp. pp. 139-254.

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voluntaristic, overextended, and prone to promote the unity of anomic society through technocratic and symbolic fiction. In between, the political parties and the institution of parliament have yet to mature. Yet it is precisely on their development that the consolidation of a stable democracy will hinge.

The civilian government has completed two-thirds of its term in office and has fulfilled a very important function of the transition to democracy, namely the mobilization of democratic values. This has been the most salient achievement of Alfonsín. But this function alone cannot guarantee the process of transition as a whole. As a phase of the process, it has run its course. Two other functions must now be served for the transition to succeed: the coordination of organized interests, and the modernization (or better, the *aggiornamento*) of the economy. It is possible that, by 1989, a reasonably healthy bipartisan system will have emerged. It will be centered on Argentina's two "historic" parties — the *Unión Cívica Radical*, and the *Partido Justicialista*. Neither is a truly seasoned modern party, but the obstacles in their path can be overcome. Each has its own mixture of strength and weakness. The *Radicales* have in their favor a rich tradition of legal, liberal, and democratic integrity. But they are moralistic, clientelistic, managerially inept and lacking a fluid and pragmatic rapport with both labor and business groups. They are, after all, the party of traditional middle groups. The *Peronistas*, for their part, are much more deft in their relations with organized corporate interest groups — unions, business, army, and the Church. But they are notorious for their propensity to be corrupted by those very interest groups and are beset by a nefarious tradition of authoritarianism, populism, factionalism, and violence. To the Right and to the Left of these two large parties are smaller parties (like the UCD, a party of the Center-Right that has gained ground especially in Buenos Aires, and the Leftist PI, which has not) that can act as more radical critics of current policies and as catalysts of sharper alternatives. If the *Radicales* would slant the theme of economic modernization towards the Center-Right of the political spectrum and manage to articulate the interests of exporters and investors with their more traditional concerns and constituencies, they would supplement the mobilizing civic legacy of Alfonsín with a more dynamic and managerial profile.[6] If the Peronistas manage to combine their traditional concern with

6. See the opinion of the new Radical presidential candidate and governor of Córdoba, Eduardo Angeloz, *El tiempo do los argentinos*, (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1987).

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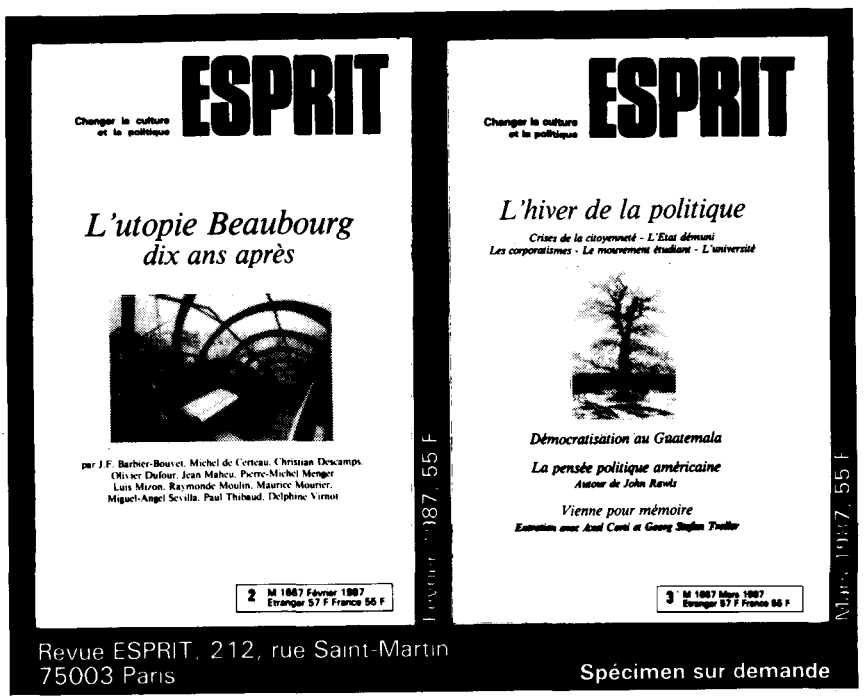
redistribution and ties to the unions with a serious commitment to democratic rules, fiscal restraint, and responsible management of the state, they could become a credible progressive alternative to Center-Right coalitions. Both parties would have to resign the temptation to parade as total movements ready to clash. There are some signs that in each of them political operatives are learning the styles required to complete the transition to democracy: responsibility, self-limitation, and competition within the bounds of shared rules. After the 1987 elections, Argentina is in fact co-governed by these two parties. Between now and the general elections of 1989, much depends on how these two parties manage to combine competition and consensus, confrontation and accord, legitimate political clashes and the defense of the system that encompasses them both. It is a delicate balance: if it is well managed, democracy will be consolidated and the democratic regime will cross the symbolic threshold of a presidential succession. If it is not properly managed, a more familiar but sinister scenario will take over: powerful partial interests (labor, business, the military) will invade the stage, first bypassing the democratic rules of the game and then cannibalizing the state once again.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*Argentina: A Blackmailed Democracy**

Isidoro Cheresky

After many years of dictatorship, a new democratic regime was established in Argentina in December 1983. For the first time, the rules of public life became the focus of public debate and the political community began to look at itself critically. The possibility for a democratic regime found a fragile but decisive footing in changing political beliefs and began to gain popularity. The change of regime was felt to be only a beginning. More importantly, a political system was to be refurbished which, although grounded in the constitution, had been unstable since the late 1920s. There were, however, obstacles posed by the more authoritarian ideologies of the corporations. One of the corporations was more characteristic of the military, but all had their counterparts in the political traditions of a society haunted by authoritarianism and populism.

Populism includes the democratic idea, but it is embroiled in the leader/mass relation in such a way that the authoritarian dimension tends to prevail. In that bond, the will of the people, screened from conflict and differences, is regulated by the leader. The emergence of a democratic-liberal framework is quite recent and clashes with populism. The 1976 authoritarian regime created the conditions for a new conception of politics which could not flourish. These conditions had to be perceived differently, and this happened when external factors intervened.

Under the military regime a strange dispute arose in the name of

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* An earlier version of this article appeared as "Argentina: Régimen politico de soberanía compartida" in *Punto de Vista* (Nov.-Dec. 1987), pp. 15-22. Translated by David Berger

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human rights and made claims in areas about which the authorities wished to remain silent. It was sparked by the victims' relatives confronting a previously unknown political experience — the search for the "disappeared." They were forced to create a forum in which they could publicly articulate their common experiences, which did not fit within the populist and revolutionary traditions. These dominant ideologies did not account for individual fate, except within collective categories: class, the people, etc. State policies were perceived as disguises for social and economic interests: the mention of rights was considered a cover for the dominant interests. Starting from these notions, could one say anything in the face of the events which, all things considered, pointed to the nature of the actors? The appeal to "human rights" filled this void. It was represented by the mothers, who became better known by the nickname the military derisively gave them: the mad-women of the Plaza de Mayo. Their presence appealed to principles that could not be openly challenged and were difficult to dispel. The military regime could not stamp them out because it could not justify a repressive policy against them. In spite of the fact that some of the women were carried off, their regular presence made them appear like miraculously healed persons in an almost unknown public sphere. For Argentinians, their weekly walk in front of Casa Rosada (the presidential palace) became a reminder of the authoritarian experience that had generally been accepted in silence.

The appeal to "human rights" was not entirely new, but previously it had been only marginal. Now it was part of a humanism which cleared away old cleavages and could appeal to international organizations and Western countries to intercede without concern for political coloration. There were also the mothers demonstrating in favor of rights such as information, respect for life, and laws which gave political meaning to their petitions. This democratic wave grew more intense during the 1983 electoral campaign, but received its main boost from the judges appointed to satisfy the demands for justice, which precipitated a public debate concerning the authoritarian past. This debate developed along two lines: first, it extended to new fields such as the social equality the Peronists used to emphasize; second, it led to a true liberalization of social relations, i.e. dissolution of the democratic-populist in favor of a democratic-liberal linkage. In the post-authoritarian context the idea of popular legitimacy was thus joined to political pluralism and a questioning of corporatism.

The cornerstone of democratization was the legal system. Those

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responsible for the authoritarian past had to account for violations of human rights and the breaking of republican laws. The judicial system was to indict those who had preached violent revolution and those in the armed forces who, under the pretext of fighting subversion, had broken the law and violated humanitarian principles. What excited the people and made the democratic transition seem credible, however, was the promise of the army to account for military abuses — especially those of the first three juntas. Those who had always enjoyed immunity could now be brought to justice! In a country where CONADEP (the national commission created by the government to investigate disappearances) counted some 9000 "disappeared" (estimates go as high as 30,000), the indictments were expected to multiply. As the courts began to exert independence, however, the army began to balk. As the trials seemed to get out of hand, it became more recalcitrant and the radical government sought to regulate the judicial process.

The April Events

At the end of December 1986, when hundreds of NCO's were going to be questioned by the courts and others were feeling threatened by a similar fate, Alfonsín's government sought to calm things by approving a law known as "*punto final*."[1] This law placed a limit of 60 days on the time during which indictments could be issued for political crimes committed during the period when the army was in control. But the courts got around this limit by indicting several hundred people, mostly retired officers. The courts also used the occasion to seize dossiers lying about in military tribunals. This is when the military — especially intermediate cadres — began to take steps. They revolted in mid-April 1987 and, knowing that they could not count on civilian support, acted autonomously. They pointed their arms "outside" their military units, but made sure not to show their faces outside the barracks. They claimed to be a movement "within the armed forces" in order to show that the military was with them against society, although this quasi-trade-union label made it appear much more like the usual demonstrations by other social groups.

It began with a captain who, refusing to appear before the Córdoba court, was declared in contempt. He took refuge in the barracks, where he was shielded by his comrades — including the officers who refused to deliver him to the court. The next day a group of officers from various

1. Cf. my note in *Esprit*, (March 1987).

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localities, headed by a lieutenant-colonel generally regarded as a hero of the Falkland War and himself not under prosecution, opened another front by occupying the Campo de Mayo military academy. They demanded total amnesty, denounced the high army command for betraying them, and sought to have some of the chiefs dismissed. As the rebellion grew, tens of thousands of people massed in front of the Casa Rosada and at the Congress square, ready to defend the constitutional order. In a country accustomed to coups and "*planteos*" (actions), this was unprecedented, except for the October 17, 1946 events, when a popular demonstration managed to free General Peron, who had been imprisoned by the military.[2] What was at stake this time was not a personified ideal but the vision of a new political life. On the basis of consensus, there was a genuine realignment of the political system. The political parties came up with a document of democratic compromise and remained in a position of leadership. After Holy Week, a general strike was to be called by the CGT (General Confederation of Labor). Business leaders also announced they would side with democracy.

The country appeared to be divided into two camps: on one side, a military nucleus; on the other, civilians; the former entrenched in the barracks, the latter deployed in the streets. Initially, most of the army (according to some generals) remained loyal to the government. But as time went on, it did not look like the presidential order to put down the rebellion was going to be carried out. Most officers were with the rebels, even though some of them disagreed with their methods, and had no intention of attacking them. What developed was a confrontation between two viewpoints: that of the rebels wishing to precipitate a confrontation, and that of society seeking the restoration of political legitimacy.

After the fourth day, with the people demonstrating in the streets, Alfonsín succeeded in convincing the insurgents to surrender. They did not wish to appear in open defiance of legal authority, which would have resulted in their isolation and failure. What was decisive was not the assurance that most of the trials would be suspended, since that was already promised before the rebellion. At first the rebels were on the defensive and kept emphasizing their respect for the constitutional order, not only out of expediency but also because they did not know who to blame: the executive, the courts or various sectors of the

2. During the attempted coup of June 20, 1955, the Peronists also mobilized in order to prevent an overthrow of the government.

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populace. The rebelling army had no power to impose a policy, although it did exhibit lobbying power and the ability to blackmail and disrupt things to the point of precipitating a civil war. At the the same time, it faced an expanding public sphere.

To a certain extent the aspiration of democracy reflected changes in public life. After the April events, the standard image of a powerful military confronting an isolated and powerless government was shattered. Here the usual "militarist" explanation of the way a *coup d'état* develops or of the genesis of dictatorial regimes is inapplicable, because these regimes can be successful only if they come about as a backlash to a political and social crisis and receive some legitimacy from the people. Allende's regime failed only after a majority alliance in parliament questioned the executive's actions and accused him of lacking democratic legitimacy. Because such challenges came from within the system, and as a result of a badly handled social polarization, large numbers of Chileans could see Pinochet as a healthy solution.

The Military and the Public Sphere

The April events demonstrated how things were different from the situation of the typical *coup d'état*. Yet there remained in the army an opposition impervious to any court action. The ensuing dismissals in the army were limited and involved mostly generals, while the potential for conflict remained. The respect shown by the President toward the leader of the rebellion (calling him "a hero of the Malvinas"[3]), the freedom of movement he enjoyed in prison, and rumors about negotiations between the political leadership and the military, all contributed to the feeling that there would be no public debate and no adherence to institutional requirements. All proceedings against the military, and particularly the arraignment of the accused, were suspended. Having chosen a course of appeasement in order to avoid an intensification of the insurrection, the government had to find a way of exempting most officers from prosecution. The frequently raised subject of exemption from responsibility on the basis of "following orders" was once again placed on the agenda.

3. After obtaining the surrender, President Alfonsín addressed the crowd, calling the rebels' action "a mutiny," — a term which diminished the gravity of their behavior and therefore the possible penal consequences. In so doing, he also sidestepped the courts innovative action. The federal judge of the locality where the rebellious core was located was the first to demand surrender in applying the article of the penal code concerning sedition and began the appropriate proceedings.

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The 1983 law (No. 23,049), by which the Alfonsín government had undertaken to prosecute those responsible for "aberrant measures" in the repression of the guerillas, paved the way for the trial of those who had planned and issued the orders; as far as the subordinates were concerned, "it could be assumed, unless shown by evidence to the contrary, that they had acted through an unavoidable error except when the action involved committing cruel and aberrant acts."[4] The law thus implies that the accused should be examined to determine any possible responsibility. A loophole was clearly left for judicial interpretation. In other respects, the December 1985 decree of the Federal Court of Buenos Aires condemned most members of the first three juntas and paved the way for the prosecutions of other responsible parties.[5]

Since 1986, and especially after the April events, the government has relied on excessive judicial action, unleashing a struggle with the military. But this is just the first play in a con game. Since the installation of the constitutional regime, the military has continued to express itself in public — particularly through the chiefs of staff. Those officers who thought that this did not faithfully reflect discontent among the ranks responded by breaking discipline and at times even by resigning. This curious situation continued well after the April events. When Alfonsín introduced a bill dealing with "following orders," he called it an act of justice in step with his regular policies and in accord with a national consensus.[6] According to Alfonsín, it was not a matter of exoneration, but of ascribing responsibility for the crimes to the true offenders: "There is no longer impunity in Argentina, and the disappearance of impunity is expressed in the trial and conviction of those responsible as well as in public information concerning what has taken place and how it is being carried out."[7] At the same time, however, he deplored the fact that, under the new law, those really responsible for "the very serious events" were going unpunished.

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4. Text of the law resulting from the Senate amendment to the initial bill.

5. The text in question provided for "the trial of superior officers who comanded the zones and subzones of defense during the war against subversion and of all those who had operational responsibilities" (point 30 of the sentence of December 9, 1985).

6. In the middle of the April crisis the political parties, the trade unions, and the heads of business organizations signed a "democratic compromise" which, among other things, maintained "that reconciliation among Argentinians will not be possible except within the framework of justice, full acceptance of the law, and the recognition of responsibility." Quoted in *La Nación* (April 19, 1987).

7. Message read by President Alfonsín announcing the introduction of a bill on the duty to follow orders.

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According to the Presidential bill, lieutenant colonels or higher ranking officers during the events were responsible for what happened during the anti-subversive war. The military heads sought a law restraining the courts, although their ultimate aim was total amnesty since, as they argued, the prosecutions were unfounded. The Navy chief alluded to amnesty, while General Caridi clearly vindicated the guerillas' "annihilation" and pointed out what it had cost the army — the "conviction of the commanding officers[8] and the trials against a number of comrades."[9] The military appealed to national reconciliation, but their trump card was not the people's understanding. Implicit in their speeches, and behind the scenes in the governmental palace, they threatened destabilization of the public order if the government did not heed the pleas of the intermediary cadres. The similar views of the chief of staffs and the President could only be provisional, since the former considered all legislation of this type to be a step to eventual total amnesty.

During the April crisis Alfonsín had stated that any negotiations with the rebels would scuttle the democratic project.[10] In the post-1983 political renewal such criticism of corporatist wheeling and dealing was essential. During the presidential campaign, Alfonsín himself had denounced the pact between the military and the unions, intimating that the roots of authoritarianism were not solely in the military. In submitting the bill, the President wished to uphold the same principles and to reject political realism: "We are ready to defend the power of the constitution no matter the price."[11] After the April events, Alfonsín defended his actions as sovereign, while public opinion saw them as the result of military pressures. The President presented the new provisions as meant "to reconcile the armed forces with Argentine society" and as a free decision of the authorities: "Such reconciliation ought not, must not at all be the result of any weakness on the part of society . . . . We now have power."[12] While this was happening, the Radicals' leader was arguing that the legislation ought to be voted on without any further

8. It concerns members of the first military juntas.

9. Speech by Gen. Caridi on the occasion of the celebration of Armed Forces Day, *La Nación* (May 30, 1987).

10. In particular, he said: "(I will not) make any concessions to an initiative or pressure no matter which, that tries to limit, negotiate, or place conditions on the equal submission to the rule of law of all citizens — in or out of uniform." As quoted in *La Nación* (April 18, 1987).

11. Speech by Alfonsín at the introduction of the bill concerning following orders, *La Nación* (May 18, 1987).

12. Speech by Alfonsín, *La Nación*, May 18, 1987.

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delay because of military impatience. But before this bill was finally passed, it was changed at the President's express request, thus betraying the extent of pressures deployed. With the new changes worked out under military pressure, all those with a position lower than brigadier-general would be exempted from prosecution as long as they were not involved in planning the crimes and did not carry them out.

Such reform was undertaken in the name of fairness, because it did not take full account of one's actual responsibility. Nevertheless, subsequent legislation was not a function of the amendments to the bill but rather a result of the intervention of corporative pressure. The political power coped with this situation by seeking to avoid the growing breach between theory and practice from becoming total. The theory was not meant to conceal the negotiations. Everyone seemed aware of the twisting of the principles. Both the people and the executive insisted on a simple profession of faith to exorcise a deceptive reality. Presidential pronouncements were momentarily couched in the language of collective values rather than in the slogans of real power. In a budding public sphere, the semblance of legitimacy is dependent on a leader capable of playing by the rules of the game. But if presidential authority is to retain a socially positive tone, it needs to be articulated within a democratic dynamic by extending rights, whereas in practice it became defensive. The danger here is that this divergence will cause Argentines to lose confidence in the value of politics and public debate.

This raises the question of the role of the President during the "democratic transition." In the context of a limited democratic regime operating within a weak political system, a kind of "democratic Caesarism" has developed in which the President, through his image and direct contact with the people, sustains confidence in the system. He must represent unity within the majority party, thus compensating for its organizational weaknesses while routinizing his charisma. In taking charge of the "solution" of the political problem, the President has intensified the shortcomings of political life by concentrating power. There is thus a contraction of the public sphere because the diversity of demands are absorbed by the center; the leader is forced to justify military requests democratically.

Military Obedience and Justice

The military obedience law of 1983 must be analyzed in relation to democratic developments. Based only on a subsidiary article of the Code

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of Military Justice,[13] it questioned the primacy of civil law over military law and the presumption that all citizens knew the law. The new law substituted for "cruel and deviant acts" the more precise terms "rape, robbery, removing and hiding of minors, substitution of civilian status, and improper appropriation of real property" for those who could not claim to be following orders. Murder and torture could still come under the statute of "service-connected actions"[14] and could not be punished. These provisions were criticized as violating the principle of justice, but the result is more like a political decision because it does not absolve many of those indicted: it simply places them outside the law.

Clearly, the military was interested primarily in avoiding prosecution. Far from shifting their responsibility to their superiors or asking the victim's pardon, most of those indicted — judging from their public statements — are divided into those who deny the facts and those who acknowledge them but do not regard them as trangressions. Some of these people are even proud of their doings and are ready to repeat them. The denial of justice lies not only in the fact that the judicial retribution envisaged by the new law for ascribing responsibility did not include consultation with the people. It also lies in providing no explanation for repressive actions either to the victims, their relatives, or anyone else.

There is a tradition of silence regarding the events in question, which is connected with the clandestine manner in which the military carried out what became their own war. Executions and tortures became common, but there were also a long series of unpublicized harassments. It was exceptional for anyone arrested to be indicted. The military became a veritable shadow army, screened by the very regime it had created. Among the victims were many who had been arrested by mistake: they were seized by the "annihilation" machine but never released. The army's illegal activities were facilitated in particular by its inner mechanisms.[15] But they stemmed primarily from the corporatist soldiers' beliefs in Christianity and Western values — values which could as well become the source of a critique of lawlessness.

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13. Art. 514 of the Code of Military Justice. For a critique of the juridical aspects of this, see *Código de Justicia Militar*, *Doctrina Penal* (Buenos Aries: Editorial de Palma, 1986).

14. Anticipating criticisms, Alfonsín promised to change "The Code of Military Justice" so that discipline in the barracks will no longer be reduced to "blind obedience."

15. With reference to silence in the navy, its chief, Admiral Arosa, explained that his branch "simply feels that when one has the conviction that one has done one's duty, nothing much remains to be said." *La Nación*, (May 18, 1987).

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Acting outside the law was a way of avoiding leaving any traces. The military claimed to be waging a war against subversion: a silent war without history. Everything was done to insure silence: archives burned; the places where the "disappeared" were held were often located away from military bases and later vandalized or destroyed. The application of the law to follow orders threatens to reinforce this silence by obstructing the reintegration of the military into society. At any rate, the traces of this past are ineradicable. Trying to ignore them may result in social repression. In order for memory to have a place in public life, society must attain a minimum consensus concerning its past. The government wagers that the new legal provisions will avoid any unforeseen outcomes, and that in time the modernization of the army will weaken corporatism.

Military Culture and Civil Society

To understand the military's resistance to integration into democratic life and to gauge the chances of the government's strategy, one must ask what makes it so cohesive. The answer may lie in a system of beliefs and representations, plus an appeal to a military social imaginary. The Argentine armed forces have adopted a so-called doctrine of "national security." Its foundation is the notion of the permanent confrontation between East and West having the peripheral nations as a privileged battleground. This allows a translation of the idea of national defense into a "geopolitical" framework. The nation derives its role from its emplacement in a camp, so that the "internal" political play unfolds within the logic of that position. The anti-subversive war is considered a mere episode in that global confrontation. Underlying this military outlook is the state of total war involving the militarization of society. In Argentina this ideology comes to encompass everything. The military is considered to be the center of the national defense apparatus because "revolutionary warfare affects all aspects of national life and, in particular, those characterized by weak defenses peculiar to democratic institutional structures . . ."[16]

The April events reveal certain features associated with corporatism. Wishing to retain, at least formally, a relation to "civilian" institutions, the seditious military claimed that the insurrection resulted "from an internal problem" within the armed forces. Accordingly, the uprisings

16. Decree of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces" in *La Natión*, (March 12, 1987).

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were necessary because the general army staff was not "representative." The paradox here is that an entity welded by discipline, whose vertical structure depends largely on obliterating individual responsibility, raised the problem of the leaders' representative role. It was not a question of deliberation but of recognition. The military had the notion that, in nominating its chiefs, the government pasted a dummy head on its military body.[17] The chiefs were seen as having allowed discord into the army with the introduction of an external factor: "civilian" justice. At times the rebels seemed to resent the generals more than civilian enemies. In fact, their demand for the dismissal of the chiefs and their replacement by others chosen from their own list reveals how they sought to overcome internal dissension. They called for the institution of a command they could accept, i.e., one that would protect the military from external interference. Their main concern, however, was to avoid judicial action. In their opinion, the courts embodied social concerns and, as an officer told the press, judges could not understand military men. They bitterly complained of attacks by journalists, politicians, etc. against military institutions.

What lies behind all the military's complaints is interference from the courts. First of all, the relation of the military to national goals was taken for granted. There are institutions and values to be defended and enemies to be fought. Who could question anything done by the military and by what criteria? In short, judges are only civilians, whose job is not to defend the fatherland. Finally, the military is in fact a corps, an institution, while justice is concerned with individuals. Army unity, however, does not prevent the chiefs from interpreting unchanging

17. Since 1983 the chiefs of the different army corps are formally subordinated to the President of the Republic, who is at the same time the armies' Commander in Chief. These Chiefs of Staff have been nominated and, at times, removed from office, precipitating the retirement of dozens of high officers who saw younger ones being preferred. General Caridi, Chief of Staff of the land army, clearly outlined the rights of the army on the very day after the April events that the senators, going back on their engagement, approved a corrected version of the law to follow orders. After an elliptical reference to the role of the military in *coups d'état*, he argued that "(We) all have . . . in some way . . . been responsible . . ." But this admission of "errors made" allowed him to urge "all sectors of national life" to undertake deep reflection. His tone of authority — in contrast with his predecessor's — corresponds to an institutional position which is especially established because "The Army defends the Fatherland even before it exists formally, protecting the new being and contributing decisively to its birth as a glorious midwife of history." Having demanded respect for the institution, he concluded that it was "a fundamental pillar of the Argentine Nation." Not a word was mentioned regarding the recent uprising. Speech given at the celebration of Land Army Day, *La Nación* (May 30, 1987).

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goals in different ways. At any rate, the alternative to corporatism threatened to result in the disintegration of the army. Consequently, the government might lose control over the army. In reality, the argument reflected fantasies not of division leading to particularism but to individualism. The military's outlook rejects all individualism that posits citizens confronted with the law instead of the soldier-link upholding the notion of the duty to follow orders. The figure of the soldier excludes the citizen; as a result, it is inconceivable that what is done by men in uniform can be judged outside the barracks.

If military unity has been maintained in spite of social pressures, it is not because all those in uniform are in the same boat. In the military there are also nationalists and liberals, and the range may even be greater, although certainly more slanted toward the right than in civil society. The divisions within the army in power show that one should not confuse imaginary specificity with political identity. The frequent reference to a "military party" is unfounded. Yet there is a general notion of the military and its place in society that is upheld, especially when what is at stake are fundamental matters. Thus, during the April crisis, the cleavage between rebels and loyal troops was weak, while that between military and civilians increased. In fact, the military has very different notions of legitimacy. Its notion is based on substantial national objectives, unlike that of the popular will, which is built on a conflictual base. If the military called for a political solution following the "dirty" war, this did not mean an acceptance of democratic principles. On the contrary, the political solution to the April crisis involved the recognition of demands and of a privileged position enjoyed by the military .[18] The cohesion shown by the army in opposition to the rest of society, and especially to the courts, entails the protection of the generation that launched the war against subversion and of the special status of the military, placing them above the law. Government policy seems to have accepted the blackmail of insubordination, while seeking to change the structure of military institutions.

Democracy and Military Corporatism as the Base for a Mixed Regime

The process of democratization in Argentina poses particular problems since democratic principles have only meager antecedents, although there are strong egalitarian values and a deep-seated belief in

18. On democracy as a political regime see Claude Lefort, "La Question de la démocratie," in *Essais sur le politique*, (Paris: Seuil, 1986). On "promises not kept" see Norberto Bobbio, *Il futuro della democrazia*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1985).

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the will of the people as the source of just power. Yet calling this process a transition implies that times are maturing, whereas the post-authoritarian situation holds no guarantee for the future. In Argentina democratic principles coexist with other principles of legitimacy.

Democratic regimes are imperfect. Social inequalities which had been moderated by the mechanisms of solidarity are now reappearing in new forms. Authoritarian crystallizations remain everywhere. This is especially true in the political arena in the representation of interests where other power centers such as corporatism compete. This neo-corporatist dimension in social relations implies that democracy must be seen as a movement of continual questioning; that, far from being just an institutional system, it is a reference to values never fully realized. Nevertheless, corporatism has taken a special turn in Argentina because interest groups compete on the same terrain with political representation. But military corporatism is different from other corporatisms, for it does not function within a democratic framework. Of course, it also acts as a pressure group, but above all it constitutes an autonomous whole that largely enacts its own laws and avoids public debate. This corporatism has traditionally presented itself as a substitute for the democratic regime. Presently, however it seems to be seeking an uneasy alliance with democratic systems.

Recent events seem to imply that a lasting coexistence between different principles of legitimacy has become possible and that it is reinforced by a mutual recognition of the two systems. This means that a truly mixed regime may already be in place. This composite regime should not be considered transitory. It is not that democratization is condemned to fail, but rather that such coexistance can no longer be conceived in terms of overcoming "obstacles." The two different principles are not entirely separate, otherwise it would not be possible to consider the regime as a unit. But two poles do exist — the summit of the representative system and the military institution — each embodying different logics. The future of such a regime remains unclear.

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NOTES AND COMMENTARY:

Rights and Writing in South Africa

Russell A. Berman

In an initial paragraph of his "State of the Union Address," delivered to Congress January 25, 1988, President Reagan made reference to the opening phrase of the Constitution in order to articulate once again his conservative political philosophy. "We, the people" — if for others the phrase might point to a public sphere, a populist collective, the agent of history as progress, or the founding principle of democracy, it takes on a very different significance in the presidential gloss. The sentence in the original document defined the project which "we, the people" undertook: to form a more perfect union and to pursue a wide range of goals and substantive values — justice, common defense, welfare, and domestic tranquility. By removing the subject — "we, the people" — from its grammatical context, Reagan effectively obliterated the subsequent text, repressed the values pursued by what he labels "the most exciting revolution ever known to humankind," and transformed the designation of agency into the parsimonious limiting principle of the conservative agenda: "the revolutionary notion that the people grant government its rights, and not the other way around."[1] Reagan the revolutionary? Unlikely. What is at stake in the passage is, on the contrary, the effort to subvert the welfare state, regulatory agencies, minimal efforts to redistribute wealth, affirmative action, in general: an agenda derived from a liberal universalism, now to be replaced by a defense of privilege, protected by the appealing alibi that less government is, simply, good government.

In Reagan's account, "we, the people" is the term which permits an erasure of the substance of democracy; what remains is the formal mechanism of a stripped-down governmental apparatus that should function smoothly but also blindly, without content or self-understanding. There is little room left for political debate or partisan difference, which is proscribed or, at least, emphatically deferred, when Reagan goes on to insist, in an imperial tone, that "there are no Republicans, no Democrats, just Americans." The promise of a two-party system, as "we, the people," with all the various differences, concerns, inter-

1. *New York Times*, January 26, 1988, p. 10

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ests and disputes, disappears into the myth of a monolithic national interest, an ideology of unity fabricated to cover over the calamities which have beset the administration. Still, with paranoid desperation, he imagines a nation unified, and, master of the mass media that he was, he watches "the millions of Americans watching and listening tonight," — watching and listening, but presumably never speaking or acting, a scopophilic politics of spectacle where "we, the people" have nothing to say. Nor should we, as Reagan announced in the final sentence of his introduction: "Let's prove to them [the millions of Americans busy watching and listening] and to ourselves that democracy works even in an election year." A daunting sentence indeed, for it can only imply that the President considers democracy least likely to work in an election year, and that elections are an obstacle to democracies, or that democracy would somehow "work" better without elections.

If the head of state presumes that elections pose a threat to democracy (rather than considering them its very life-blood), it is hardly a surprise to find that the administration has been extraordinarily reluctant to enforce effective sanctions against the South African state, which shares the skeptical evaluation of the electoral principle. Along with this admittedly abrupt introduction, one should add that, when Reagan later went on, in the foreign policy section of the address, to invoke the Nicaraguan Contras as "freedom fighters" — "let us be for the people of Nicaragua what Lafayette, Pulaski and Von Steuben were for our forefathers and the cause of American independence" — and then lists similar "freedom fighters" in Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Angola, he does not mention South Africa. There are, allegedly, no "freedom fighters" in South Africa or Namibia, at least none comparable to Lafayette, Pulaski and Von Steuben. The unintentional irony in this omission has to do with none other than "we, the people," the intertextual figure that appears both at the outset of the American Constitution and similarly in the South African Freedom Charter of 1955, the central document in the opposition to apartheid and now, after years of banning, the credo of the emancipation movement: "We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know . . ." It is a familiar actor at the outset of the declaration, one who conjoins Constitution and Charter, bound together in prose if not in deed. Did the authors of the Charter refer intentionally to the 18th century Republic or did their style merely draw from the same democratic tradition? In either case, the lexemic congruence points to a road not taken, an alternative set of values that might have once been available to American policy-makers.

Without belaboring any further the inadequacy of American policy in South Africa — an inadequacy which becomes particularly evident when measured against some of the same historical principles the President chose to invoke — it is rather the Freedom Charter itself that will be examined. Two separate agendas are in order. First one wants to learn *about* South Africa, indisputably one of the major moral and political challenges in coming years.

One can not only learn about South Africa but, secondly, *from* South Africa

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as well. The following account places the study of South Africa squarely within existing professional patterns and university structures. The encounter with a society so different from ours but so uncannily the same in its traditions, its history, and its encoded hierarchies of class and race flushes out the no longer so hidden presumptions in the organization of knowledge that is objectified as the conservative structures of the university. The schizophrenia of the body politic, where considerable opposition to apartheid has little affect on governmental policy, and where the substance of "we, the people" has been radically inverted, corresponds to the tension, within the university, between a veneer of academic liberalism and a tenacious cultural eurocentrism.

That traditional eurocentrism can be criticized rather easily. Yet the encounter with South Africa raises other questions as well, questions that bear less on the traditionalist sectors of the academy than on the most theoretically innovative. To pick on one familiar slogan that has made the post-structuralist rounds, how does the celebration of the "ends of man" look once one recognizes that the "rights of man" still remain an unfulfilled promise? And as our cultural theory compellingly demolishes the plausibility of objective representation, what are the consequences for the evaluation of a political movement whose minimalist program remains the establishment of representative government? These are challenges we confront as soon as we are willing to learn from South Africa.

The 1948 elections brought the Nationalist Party to power in South Africa, and today, forty years later, it remains in power. This vehicle of Afrikaner nationalism was built on traditional structures of segregation and hierarchy, as it pursued the institutionalization of the formal policy of apartheid. Simultaneously, however, a new generation was coming to the fore in the Youth League of the African National Congress, including the young lawyer Nelson Mandela, which was dissatisfied with the moderation of the older leadership which appeared increasingly ineffective in the face of the radicalization of the government. As Albert Luthuli, (President of the ANC during much of the 1950s and 1960s), points out, the new spirit of activism drew in part on the promises of the Western powers during WWII, notably the Atlantic Charter of 1941 in which Roosevelt and Churchill articulated some shared values in opposition to the so-called "new order" of the dictatorships of fascist Europe. (Echoes of that declaration can be heard in the Freedom Charter itself.)[2] In fact, in South Africa as in much of Africa and Asia, the anti-colonial movements in the post-war period could readily seize on the self-definitions of the West with regard to self-determination, democracy, and equal rights in order to erode the legitimacy of colonial empires. This contradiction indicates how certain aspects of third-world politics, even when directed against the West, correspond to at least part of the legacy of the West, a paradox evident nowhere

2. Albert Luthuli, *Let My People Go* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), p. 98. For the text of the Atlantic Declaration, cf. *International Conciliation* (1941) No. 372, pp. 595-596.

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more clearly than in South Africa, whose own General Smuts could participate in the founding acts of the United Nations while pursuing domestic racist policies. As Luthuli puts it, "a world statesman beyond the Union's borders, a subtle and relentless white supremacist at home. . . On the world stage he was vocal about freedom, human liberty, and Western values. At home he denied us these things . . ."[3] So when the ANC berates the West for providing material support to a regime that subverts "freedom, human liberty, and Western values," it is paradoxically, in at least one sense, more Western than the West itself.

In this context of domestic and international political change as well as the painful contradictions of political rhetoric, the ANC took on a more aggressive character: "The challenge was to be on fundamentals," Luthuli writes in retrospect, "we were no longer interested in ameliorations and petty adjustments. There was no longer any doubt in our mind that without the vote we are helpless." The result was the 1949 Program of Action, emphasizing demonstrations and civil disobedience: "This disobedience was not directed against the law. It was directed against all those particular discriminatory laws, from the Act of Union onwards, which were not informed by morality," and the demonstrations that followed culminated in the Defiance Campaign of 1952, refusal on a mass scale to respect the system of segregation.[4]

Like Luthuli, the educator Z. K. Matthews underscores how inadequate representation disenfrachises the population and distorts the character of culture: "The exercise of power or force can never be an adequate criterion for the settlement of questions of human relations from which moral considerations can by no means be ruled out." Obviously a concern with law, morality, and human rights is being played out against a reliance on the sheer facticity of power. As President of the ANC in the Cape in 1953, Matthews called for "a congress of the people, representing all the people of this country irrespective of race or colour, to draw up a Freedom Charter for the democratic South Africa of the future."[5] Those words would lead to Matthew's prosecution in the infamous Treason Trial of the late 1950s; they led as well, however, to the Congress of the People, held in Kliptown on June 25 and 26, 1955, attended by 2,844 delegates and supported by the ANC, the South African Indian Congress, the South African Colored People's Congress, and the (white) Congress of Democrats, where the Freedom Charter was adopted.

Luthuli and Matthews speak as political leaders and consequently describe these events from the standpoint of the organizations of the opposition: as if the operative aspects were prominent speeches, conventions, and programs. There is another way to tell the story of the Freedom Charter, but first consider the terms of the discussion so far. In the case of Luthuli it is indisputably a matter of universalism. For example, locating the importance of the Defiance

3. Luthuli, *op.cit.*, pp. 101-102.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
5. Matthews, *Freedom for My People* (London: Rex Collings, 1981), pp. 170, 174.

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Campaign in the establishment of cooperation between African and Indian organizations, he asks "who would have predicted, at the time of the Durban riots of 1949, when Africans and Indians were involved in terrible mutual hostility, that within three years Africans and Indians in Durban itself would be acting together to demonstrate their repudiation of injustice, cruelty and tyranny?" Ethnic conflict has given way to political unanimity. Similarly, in response to red-baiting queries, he insists that he is prepared to work together with Communists, despite political differences, in order to achieve a shared goal: again he advocates the muffling of secondary differences in the interest of a larger unity. This universalist passion, which he derives explicitly from his Christianity, pervades his evaluation of the Congress of the People: "Perhaps it was the first really representative gathering in the Union's history," and although the Charter, in his estimation, suffers from inadequate editing, some uneveness, and some points subject to criticism (presumably the clause on economic nationalization), he does not withold his appreciation of it: ". . . taken as a whole, it does give insight into the hopes and aspirations of the people who desire South Africa to be one homeland for all its inhabitants."[6] In short, the whole is always more important than the parts: the Congress unifies the nation, and the full body of the text, with all its scars, outweighs any local shortcomings.

Matthews too treats the process as a representation of the total nation, "we, the people." He ponders the absurdity of the subsequent charge of treason, for, if anyone, then it is the state that has set itself outside the genuine national interest. Of the Kliptown gathering he writes, "here for the first time in the history of the country was a Congress which brought together people drawn from all sections of the population to consider and give expression to their vision of the South Africa of the future," and the Freedom Charter "set forth the desires and aspirations of the people."[7]

For Luthuli and Matthews — and they can be seen as characteristic of a generation of anti-apartheid leaders — a vision of universalism prevails and it determines the very substance of the Charter: "We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people . . ." Robert Sobukwe's Pan-Africanists would eventually split off from the ANC in a dispute over this "black and white" clause, arguing in terms of original proprietorship and treating the white population as interlopers who, as in other colonial situations, could be expected to return to a European metropolis. In his autobiography, Luthuli goes out of his way to disagree with Sobukwe's particularism: "For us questions of who came first to which part of South Africa are irrelevant. The vital issue is not a quibble over the past, but salvation in

6. Luthuli, *op. cit.*, pp. 114, 118.
7. Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

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the present."[8] Overcoming the past and its fixations in order to achieve a secular salvation in the present: this is the underlying scheme. It constitutes the people as a whole, not shattered by ethnic or racial divisions, and that people can provide a plausible referent to a representational process based on delegation and universal suffrage. "The people shall govern" (the first article of the Charter), assumes that it is possible to articulate a popular will which, moreover, can be adequately reproduced in representative bodies (or texts, like the Charter), and finally that such a will is capable of being communicated; the operative verb in the preamble is "declare."

At stake then is a political theory that constructs the people as a linguistic community whose consensus is its will which in turn can be transferred by speech and writing as representation. It is not tradition or power, violence or sacrifice that makes the nation but speech itself. Hence Matthews' derision of the government's inability to understand metaphoric language and also Luthuli's outrage when the state authorities refuse to respond to his letters (Mandela returns to this point in his trial speeches). Such a distortion of the communicative situation indicates a flawed representation and therefore an abridgement of the human rights of the population. Those rights are set out concretely in the articles of the Charter, articulating political, social, legal, and cultural claims; they cannot be enumerated now, suffice it to say that the overriding rhetoric is one of transparency: "The doors of learning and culture shall be opened"; "Fenced locations and ghettoes shall be abolished." These rights are framed at the beginning and end of the document by linguistic acts, a pledge and an oath to participate in the community of the emancipatory struggle.

The American Declaration of Independence hedges its assertion of inalienable rights with a historicizing reference to external compulsion: "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary . . ." No such discourse of necessity appears in the Charter, for which land and liberty are simply "birthrights." The people insists on its freedom not *because* of illegitimate state power but *despite* the interventions of the police which, seizing documents at the 1955 Congress, appears in Matthew's account as an agent of disruption. The provocation does not succeed. "What any undiscerning person might have thought was just a rabble, proved to be a group imbued with a singleness of purpose and devotion to a cause from which they could not be diverted by intimidation. That was the people's finest hour."[9] "We, the people," described as "dignified" and "disciplined," is united by its commitment to a cause and proves immune to threats. It is not a "rabble" (one wonders what a rabble would be and whom the teacher and political leader Matthews is thereby denigrating) and he concludes the description of the Kliptown Congress, appropriately enough, with an allusion to Churchill, the author of *The Finest Hour*,

8. Luthuli, *op. cit.*, p. 87. The text of the Freedom Charter is included as Appendix B of this volume, pp. 239-243.

9. Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

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thereby staging the democratic movement in South Africa as a continuation of the war against fascism.

If the anti-apartheid leaders could invoke the Western rhetoric of democracy, how compatible is their account and the tenor of the Freedom Charter with our own contemporary cultural theory? Little remains, one must say, of the emphatic allegiance to the principle of representation, and language is by no means generally treated as a transparent medium of consensus-formation. Politics seem to work otherwise in the mass media spectacles of the culture industry and, for a post-modern sensibility, the modernist narrative of emancipation is at best a relic of illusions from a former age, while the explicit universalism, the thrust to totality, must sound frighteningly totalitarian to the readers of Glucksmann, Lyotard, and Derrida. What happens when, taking South Africa seriously, we plug into the advanced discussions on post-modernism, history, and cultural theory?

A conservative historicism (using the term now in Walter Benjamin's sense in the "Theses on the Philosophy of History) might allow us to evade the problem with a strategy of partitioning, a laceration of human experience into distinctive periods that boils down to a sort of temporal apartheid: in a pre-modern and pre-democratic setting a different agenda is appropriate than in the post-modern and post-political society of the spectacle. Such a treatment would of course concede, in all honesty, the parochial character of our thought, in other words, its irrelevance in much of the world: different tropes for different folks. However such an account would fail to recognize the ultra-modernized features of at least parts of the South African economy as well as some considerable traditionalism in the United States. It would function furthermore as a compensatory mechanism of bad faith to export to a distant land some worn-out political values we no longer want but cannot really throw away: South Africa forced to wear the cast-off clothing of a post-democratic consumer culture that has traded in civic responsibility and the public sphere for the free play of the shopping mall. The worst version of this indulges in a giddy enthusiasm for political violence abroad while self-righteously prescribing pacifism in a *soi-disant* home.

Nor is the problem solved if, in place of these diachronic separations, pre-modern and post-modern, one opts for the reified geography of three separate worlds. What enormous range of distinctions is levelled by a totalizing category like the "third world?" The geo-politics of superpower imperialism might well be the object of criticism but hardly provides an adequate conceptual grounding for a theory of culture. Instead of focusing critical attention, this discognitive mapping ends up blocking more questions than it answers. The globe is single, not a cluster of three free-floating planets, and that therefore the question of socialism, understood as the unfulfilled promise of a good life and substantive equality, otherwise exiled to a "second world" gulag, remains one to pose in the first world of the West. By extension, the impoverishment in the "third world" is hardly a radical other to the Western

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economies of signification and consequently needs to be regarded as a constitutive aspect in a global cultural theory. To which numbered world does South Africa belong — or does it throw a bomb into pure mathematics and explode an obsolete arithmetic, the long division of a tripartite imagination?

These interpretive models of temporal or spatial separate development ignore the complex ideological constellation of transnational interaction and domination, especially a nasty dialectic hidden in the skeleton closet of post-war politics and theory. The text of the Freedom Charter emerges from a political movement that drew on the democratic rhetoric of the anti-fascist coalition, and the metaphoric equation of the apartheid state and Nazi Germany still retains a compelling tropic power, despite all possible objections to the obvious differences between the two cases and between literal and figurative language acts. Yet that democratic rhetoric was always subverted by a practice that rendered the articulated ideals at best simply counterfactual, as the case of Smuts makes painfully clear: the secret story of colonialism is the dialectic of enlightenment. What conclusion does one draw? An inadequate, even hypocritical practice never obliterates the desiderata of utopian goals; if the Western democratic discourse has always generously tolerated its own undemocratic policies, this surely does not delegitimate a democratic program in South Africa (just as, e.g., the crimes of French colonialism in Algeria do not translate into an acquittal of Klaus Barbie for crimes in Lyon; nor does this statement acquit the French; nor does ubiquitous guilt transform an ideal of justice into an absurdity; nor, in this spiral of negative thinking, does a retreat to ideals somehow suggest a perverse erasure of human suffering). This contradictory character of Western representation does, however, point out a tension in the Freedom Charter, a tension that can explain for example the angry Pan-Africanist objections to its universalism. Because of the violence that has always been part and parcel of democracy, from the French Revolution's terror to the shelling of the Lebanese coast, it would be foolish to inflate support for democratic aspirations against apartheid with illusions or any excessive optimism; when we have a chance to watch the behavior of a future South Africa, it will be crucial to remember the history of Western practices as well as the loftiness of Western ideals.

If, borrowing from an anti-fascism of the 1940s, the Freedom Charter articulates history as progress toward an emancipation as representative government, then it is hardly insignificant to find fascism at the origin of the deconstructive refusal of that same teleological history. The reference here is of course to the recently rediscovered literary criticism of the young Paul de Man, written in occupied Belgium, especially the notorious essay on "The Jews in Contemporary Literature," where he suggests that nothing would be lost if all the Jews of Europe were deported to "a colony isolated from Europe." This specific congruence of an apology for genocide with a colonial vision relies on an argumentative structure, including a refusal of history, a decoupling of culture and history, that pervades many of the other articles

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and indeed his later work, for example the polemic against Lukács; it networks with other current theoretical production to contribute to a displacement of history by myth or a reduction of history to rhetoric. In this context, however, one should note that de Man's initial effort to protect the cultural-symbolic dimension ("contemporary literature") from the ravages of history was motivated by a frantic anxiety that European culture might be invaded by foreign elements (*une force etrangère*): certainly, given the Belgian record in Africa, an egregious misreading of the relation between something called Europe and the habits of invasion, a misreading not unlike the Afrikaner account of a white South Africa equally attracted to the racialism of Nazi Germany.

The Freedom Charter and a contradictory anti-fascism, on the one hand; on the other, fascism refusing history and implicated in the colonial project. The two hands hold out the single conundrum of modernity and post-modernism: if the modern narrative of emancipation was also imperialist, it does not follow that a post-modern proscription of the narrative could support an effective critique of imperialism or apartheid. All the theoretical debate seems just a few feet of soil spread thinly over mass graves: the colonial past silences any modernist optimism, and the ghost of collaboration haunts post-modernity. This problem has been played out indirectly in the exchange on apartheid in *Critical Inquiry*, which placed the issue of South Africa at one of the focal points of American literary theory.

It opens with a translation of Derrida's introduction to a catalogue of a 1983 exhibition Art contre/against Apartheid in which he examines the word itself — the piece is entitled "Racism's Last Word" — suggesting that South African reality is the necessary exfoliation of the term and that the term itself is a consequence, indeed the culmination of the Western tradition. The reply by Anne McClintock and Rob Nixon focuses on "The Separation of Word and History" in Derrida's piece; they note his fixation on a term which has been replaced by others (e.g., "separate development") and by shifting practices, which are of course no less racist. While appreciating Derrida's opposition to apartheid, they berate him for ignoring historical change and, deconstructive critic that he is, for "not going beyond the text," i.e., his fixation on the term. Although they raise some other issues, he can demonstrate in his reply that they have perhaps intentionally misread him, but their attack on deconstruction provokes a surprisingly spirited counter-attack on what he describes as their academic historicism and, more broadly, on political activism in general.

While Derrida certainly represses history, McClintock and Nixon clearly subscribe to a version of the historicism the inadequacies of which have already been discussed. Other modes of history might be imaginable. Yet the real problem with McClintock and Nixon is not that they criticize Derrida but that they miss the crux of his argument and therefore fail to criticize him radically enough. He not only omits history; much more important is that he transforms South Africa into an allegory for his own philosophical project, as if it were adequate to argue that apartheid depends on the metaphysics of presence

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rather than, say, on the very physical presence of the South African Defense Force, American investments, or so and so many thousands of transgressive troops crossing borders into the front-line states.

When Derrida treats "racism as a Western thing," when he suggests that South Africa depends on a "European 'discourse' on the concept of race," when he bemoans the "old language of the West," he has moved far away from the specific practices of apartheid to a Heideggerian denunciation of post-Socratic thought. Neither historical practices nor economic imperatives drive imperialism, in his account, but a metaphysics of the occident that has been operative for at least two millenia: apartheid as a *Seinsvergessenheit*, whose real crime is the "presentation of some present" and whose conclusion could only be brought about by a radical return to "a language at once very old, older than Europe, but for that very reason to be invented once more."[10]

But for that very reason, because all the dialectical nuances disappear into a monolithic metaphysics of presence, Derrida's description ends up blind to effectively critical categories, especially those in the Western lexicon. Emancipation — as enlightenment or modernity or liberalism or democracy — all this is jettisoned: ". . . the customary discourse on man, humanism and human rights, has encountered its effective and as yet unthought limit . . ." Hence, a human-rights critique of South Africa, one based perhaps on the Freedom Charter, is disallowed, since it would rely on an anachronistic anthropology. In the heat of the polemic with his critics, Derrida becomes more consistent and even suggests that the opponents of apartheid are not simply ineffective but in fact complicitous with apartheid because of shared philosophical assumptions and discursive arrangements. Both the South African state and its opponents valorize the term "democracy" and that common humanist episteme is precisely the problem. Freedom, thus teaches one of the premier philosophers of the neoconservative 1980s, is slavery. By this point, however, it is clear that Derrida is merely projecting the terms of Parisian anti-totalitarianism — the fashion of former radicals on their short trek into the towers of learning — onto South Africa about which he has nothing to say: non-referentiality if it ever was.

The critique of the metaphysics of presence sovereignly ignores the key issue for the anti-apartheid movement: representation — one person, one vote, the first article of the Freedom Charter. One need not invest the prospect of a representative government with exaggerated hopes (our own experience would caution us against that) in order to recognize the material urgency of this single point in the real political situation. Luthuli himself gives such a judicious evaluation: "The Freedom Charter is open to criticism. It is by no means a perfect document. But its motive must be understood, as must the deep yearning for security and human dignity from which it springs."[11]

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10. Jacques Derrida, "Racism's Last Word," in *"Race," Writing, and Difference*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed., (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 332, 333, 337.
11. Luthuli, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

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"By no means a perfect document" — the *Urtext* of the representative principle is flawed, itself an inadequate representation, distorted by the process of production, writing and all its obscurities, and it *therefore* leaves room for discussion: the Charter "is open to criticism." Its unrepresentative character — inconclusive and inexhaustive — makes representation possible. The universalist modernity of the Charter turns out to be already post-modern in the sense of presuming plurality and heterogeneity. This version of the genesis of the Charter is related in a 1985 volume, edited by Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin, an oral history including interviews with Defiance Campaign volunteers who visited countless South Africans in their homes and workplaces to gather demands to be incorporated into the document and to initiate the election of delegates to the Kliptown Congress. Instead of the earlier accounts of official organizations and authorized leaders, "we, the people" suddenly emerge as a richly differentiated texture within a post-modern story of multiple authorship that remains however modernist in its desire for completion. This history of the Freedom Charter, a "history from below," presents us with a broad-based mechanism of textual production. "The Freedom Charter has a unique authority because of the mode of its creation," write the editors, who are concerned with surplus experience, "the many more people who know a great deal about the history of this period." Instead of the erstwhile "discipline" and "singleness of purpose," now an excess of data generates narrative, presumably open enough to include even the "rabble," that Matthews had written out of the representative body of the people. This vocalization of the people underlies the crucial verse in Cronin's poetry: "To learn how to speak/with the voices of this land," — not a single universal language but a plurality of voices whose non-exclusive summation adds up to a never homogeneous whole.[12]

The contrast between the accounts of Luthuli and Matthews, on the one hand, and Suttner and Cronin on the other could be expanded into a schematic history of South African narratives: from the earlier post-war novelistic attempts to achieve an inclusive totality but which fail due to the intransigence of separation (e.g., Peter Abrahams' *Wild Conquest* of 1950 or Alan Paton's *Too Late the Phalarope* of 1953) to recent writing that foregrounds an irreducible multiplicity of stories with a view toward an accumulative authenticity (Menan du Plessis' *A State of Fear* of 1985, Zoe Wicomb, *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* of 1987, or Njabulo Ndebele's theory of narrative). But that would be another story. For now the lesson from South Africa has to do with the antinomic simultaneity of the modern and the post-modern which resists any efforts at linear periodization. The point is not the projection of some historicist order into the past but the establishment of a human order in place of the long-lasting catastrophe, to cite Luthuli once more, "salvation in the present." Both the universalist refusal to accept segregated subjectivity and the resistance of the

12. Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin, *Thirty Years of the Freedom Charter* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), pp. ix-x.

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particular to any enforced identity resonate through the document, the Freedom Charter, a writing about rights, surely enough, but in some very important sense, a writing that demonstrates how writing as culture resists and refuses alienation, be it called apartheid or by any other name for dispossession and homelessness. Narrative, especially as the promise of an end to estrangement: "Ag man, I'm too old to worry about you," admits the narrator's mother in Wicomb's novel, "but with something to do here at home perhaps you won't need to make up those terrible stories, hey?"[13]

13. Zoe Wicomb, *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* (New York: Pantheon, 1987), p. 182.

The Mind of Eugene D. Genovese

Paul Gottfried

It may furrow some brows to have a self-described Marxist historian presented as a conservative. Thus one may be justified in feeling some reservations when such claims are made about Eugene Genovese. Despite Genovese's Southern conservative admirers, most notably M. E. Bradford, Clyde N. Wilson, and Forrest McDonald, and despite his sympathetic depiction of both Agrarians and Southern plantation aristocrats, he shows his leftist credentials even when he appears to embrace the Right. His essay in the *Southern Partisan*, "James Thornwell and the Southern Religion," provides a case in point. Describing Thornwell, an antebellum Presbyterian minister, as a temperate defender of slavery and as a moral critic of capitalism, Genovese exalts him as a representative of "Southern conservatives in contradistinction to conservatives who are Southerners." The Southern conservative tradition is seen as a "great one . . . that has resisted bourgeois society, its atomistic culture, and its marketplace morality." Making these culturally conservative statements, however, Genovese then proceeds to draw qualifications: "Thornwell's place" in the conservative tradition, he reminds the reader, is "your concern, not mine." Moreover, while Thornwell's "insight into ourselves . . . continues to speak to all honest and sane men," the same "great man" proposed "brave if often

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unacceptable answers" to social dilemmas.[1]

This kind of evaluation, combining praise for acknowledged conservatives with appeals to the pathos of historical distance, marks Genovese's early work on Southern slaveholders. In *The Political Economy of Slavery*, we catch traces of Nietzsche's hymn to master morality when Genovese describes the plantation class marching off in 1861 to its own destruction: "Slavery represented the cornerstone of their way of life, and life to them meant an honor and dignity associated with the power to command. When the slaveholders rose in insurrection, they knew what they were about; in the fullest sense, they were fighting for their lives."[2] In contrast to slaveholders, Southern industrialists who supported secession are shown to have no true sense of mission. They joined unthinkingly "in a crusade on behalf of a social system they had every reason to abhor."[3]

In *The World the Slaveholders Made*, Genovese sharply criticizes W. J. Cash for debunking plantation society in *The Mind of the South*.[4] Cash went too far in denying the aristocratic aspect of the Southern planter elite. Because the plantation owners failed to conform to Cash's conception of a static ruling class and because many of them lied about their ancestry (by claiming descent from seventeenth-century royalists), it was wrongly inferred that they were rednecks or parvenus. Actually, argues Genovese, the planters represented a dynamic ruling class, like European aristocrats in the early Middle Ages rather than the thoroughly effete, gentrified nobility of the decaying *ancien régime*. Genovese also discusses in the same work South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun's "undeniable claims to greatness," in helping the slaveholders' "increasing self-consciousness manifest itself politically."[5] And he offers an eloquent, extended brief for George Fitzhugh, the proslavery controversialist whom Genovese presents as one of America's most penetrating social thinkers. Fitzhugh, it is claimed, perceived the correlation between economic dehumanization and the liberal principle of economic freedom. To the charge made by the Cold War liberal, Harvey Wish (and more recently, Harry V. Jaffa), that Fitzhugh was a forerunner of fascist elitism, Genovese responds: "Fascism, in short, was the culmination of the bourgeois barbarism against which Fitzhugh had struggled." Fitzhugh is credited with stating emphatically what "few if any conservatives still want to hear: To have a world without marketplace values you must have a world without a marketplace at its center. Go backward or go forward, but if you are in earnest, then go."[6]

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1. Cf. Eugene D. Genovese, "James Thornwell and Southern Religion," *Southern Partisan*, Vol. 7 (Summer 1987), p. 19.
2. Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967), p. 270.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 208.
4. Eugene D. Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), pp. 137-38.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

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It would be wrong to intimate that Genovese is not serious about his self-understanding as a Marxist. His declarations of support for Communist revolutions, his defenses of Stalin, and his attempts to relate his own historiography with the aid of Gramsci to Marxist materialism all suggest otherwise.[7] The use by Genovese and his talented wife and collaborator, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, of Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony in delineating the paternalist structure of the Southern slave economy indicates a Marxist point of departure, albeit a derivative one. Having seen the proofs of part of their most recent work, *The Mind of the Master Class: The Life and Thought of Southern Slaveholders*, it seems clear that the authors base their view of plantation paternalism on the productive forces of the antebellum South. From their perspective, the South was an anomalous society, containing manorial institutions but already affected by the impact of industrial capitalism. Its paternalist culture was necessary to defend and justify the peaceful operation of slavery in an economy threatened by modernizing forces.

Though Genovese in most of his writings explores the human and humanizing sides of Southern paternalism, his book *From Rebellion to Revolution* underscores (and may even exaggerate) the brutality involved in establishing New World slave societies. This particular book, though it deals predominantly with West Indian slave uprisings, includes harsh comments about the treatment of slaves in the American South. It also draws extended parallels between slavery in the Caribbeans and in the American South, comparing the responses of slaveholders in both places when confronted by servile uprisings. For those who identify Genovese with positive views of Fitzhugh and Southern paternalism, *From Rebellion to Revolution* should cause some cognitive dissonance.[8]

Despite such evidence of Genovese's leftist credentials, scholars, from Bradford on the right to Fred Siegel on the left, continue to view his work as a partly coded defense of conservative propositions. These historians are probably correct. There is in fact a conservative, even reactionary, side of Genovese's historical interpretations that puts him partly to the right of the guiding principles of what now passes for American political conservatism. In contrast to the stated positions of Jack Kemp, Harry V. Jaffa, Norman Podhoretz, and even Attorney General Meese (addressing the students and faculty of Dickinson College last year), Genovese does not believe in the ontological, universal truth of the principle of democratic equality.[9] Despite his announced

7. Genovese's most detailed appraisal of his recognized mentor is "On Antonio Gramsci," in *Red and Black: Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), particularly p. 407.

8. Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge and London: L.S.U. Press, 1980).

9. In a review of Gerda Lerner's *Women and History*, Vol. 1, in *Journal of the Academy of Religion* (1977), pp. 608-614, he argues persuasively that modern feminist egalitarian views are irrelevant to the study of ancient societies. She insists on the cultural specificity of individual and feminine rights, which she links to the acquisitive individualism of

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Marxist framework, he challenges the metaphysics of equality from the right, with nods in the direction of Machiavelli, Hobbes and Nietzsche. This tendency in Genovese may account for the cordial relations between him and members of the Old Right and his uniformly bitter dealings with the essentially social democratic neoconservatives. It is the achievement of the neoconservatives and of Jaffa and other Straussians to have convinced movement conservatives that anti-Communism can be based on the commitment to equality. As Jaffa puts it: either America remains "committed to equality" or "open to the relativism and historicism that is the theoretical ground of modern totalitarian regimes."[10] What makes Genovese a particularly tempting target for Jaffaites and for neoconservatives generally is that he personifies the ideal enemy, a non-anti-Communist who defends Lenin, Stalin, Calhoun, and Fitzhugh.

But in fact Genovese does stand to the right as well as the left of his critics. Old Conservatives grasp this at once; and because they increasingly see the battle between neoconservatives and the current American Left as a sectarian war unrelated to their values and interests, they praise Genovese's rightist teachings while disregarding his identification as a Marxist. The Old Right notes the unmistakably conservative implications of his Gramscian view of the cultural hegemony of the ruling class. Genovese, building on Gramsci, stresses the inescapable role of social elites in the building of cultures and states. When applied by Genovese to the antebellum South, this perspective yields a picture of that society that is more appreciative of the planter aristocracy than anything conventional liberal historians have produced. While Genovese treats the Southern aristocracy as a doomed class, unlike John Hope Franklin and Kenneth Stampp, he elevates it to a tragic-heroic status. The planter elite embraced fate with the same grim dignity that Achilles had showed in going to his death. Indeed, unlike Marx who cheered on the bourgeois liberal Lincoln against the feudal Confederacy, Genovese appears to regret the cruel hand of History, destroying flawed noble heroes and bringing to power cunning hypocrites as leaders of the new industrial state.

Criticisms have been made of the all-inclusive manner in which Genovese subsumes all groups in the antebellum South under the plantation aristocracy's paradigmatic power. For example, Ira Berlin and Herbert G. Gutman have charged Genovese with disregarding the exclusively Negro component of Southern black culture.[11] In *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*,

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the liberal era. On the axiological centrality of democratic equality in contemporary (conventional) conservative thought, see Paul Gottfried and Thomas Fleming, *The Conservative Movement* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1988), pp. vii-xv.

10. Cf. Harry V. Jaffa, "Equality as a Conservative Principle," *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review* 8 (June 1975), p. 475.

11. Cf., for example, Herbert G. Gutman *The Black Family in Slave and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: 1976), especially pp. 309-320; and Ira Berlin, "White Majority," *Social History*, Vol. 5 (May 1977), p. 654.

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Genovese does go out of his way to note how slaves used their submissive relationship to demand fair treatment from their masters. But he also makes clear that the slaves in their exaggerated courtesy were imitating their masters, indeed took certain aristocratic qualities "much more seriously than those they ostensibly imitated."[12] Southern manners shared by both races belonged to "the supporting tendencies which normally accompany lordship and its attendant condescension." Moreover, Southern blacks looked to leaders in the style of "the *padrone*, who simultaneously protects, abuses, nourishes, and punishes." Notes Genovese: "Perhaps in no greater way did the slaves' acceptance of the aristocratic ethos, for all its positive contributions, trap them in a dependency relationship."[13]

Siegel has challenged another aspect of Genovese's application of "cultural hegemony," identifying the Southern yeomanry with values derived from the landed aristocracy. Looking at the upcountry farmers of the Southeastern United States, Siegel observes a critical social-ideological distinction between his subjects and the Tidewater planters. Appeals to natural right, explicit opposition to slavery, and demands for a broadly based franchise for election to state office cropped up repeatedly in the writings and speeches of the Southern yeomanry. Siegel finds these themes increasingly absent from the public positions of the largely Tidewater slaveholders during the nineteenth century.[14] Focusing on antebellum Virginia, he also notes the rise of industrial entrepreneurs in the northern and eastern parts of the state during the mid-nineteenth century. Like yeoman farmers, the industrialists represented attitudes and interests that did not easily coincide with the paternalistic ideology of the Tidewater South.

Genovese has explained, in response to these critical observations, that the slaveholders' hegemony was still strong enough in 1861 to carry the rest of their society behind them into war. Whatever their own doubts, Southern industrialists and non-slaveholding farmers by and large supported a struggle fought for paternalistic and aristocratic institutions, including slavery. Later Southern culture, nurtured in defeat, continued to glorify feudal and manorial ideals — and a concept of honor that seemed downright exotic to other Americans. No doubt Genovese's emphasis on the cultural continuities between antebellum and later Southern societies, both white and black, has made the conventional Left feel uncomfortable. Unlike C. Vann Woodward and other advocates of the "New South," Genovese is more impressed by

12. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), p. 118.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

14. Cf. Fred Siegel, "The Paternalist Thesis: Virginia as a Test Case," *Civil War History*, Vol. XXV (1979), pp. 246-61. A useful summation of the critical arguments levelled against Genovese's understanding of the antebellum South is Peter W. Bordaglio, "Power and Ideology in the Slave South: Eugene Genovese and his Critics," *The Maryland Historian*, Vol. XII (Fall 1981), pp. 23-37.

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the South's unchanging characteristics than its capacity for self-transformation. As Bradford has remarked, the argument that the South lacks a permanent distinctive character has always appealed to those who would extirpate the same allegedly non-existent character. Genovese has never made such an argument.[15]

Also at issue in his exchanges with his critics may be his more-than-human depiction of the plantation aristocracy. His ascribing of an all-pervasive influence to that daring but doomed class may possibly unsettle the stomachs of those who like their hagiography and history done from the bottom up. However dutifully Genovese pays homage to the Communist historian of slave revolts, Herbert Aptheker, Mao Tse Tung, W. E. B. DuBois and Gramsci, he does not display an undivided devotion to the underdog. At least part of him inclines toward the role that he and others attribute to Calhoun as the "Marx of the master class."

Significantly, when Genovese chides the plantation elite for their enslavement of others, he invokes the prophetic elements of Christianity. But these moralizing passages in *Roll, Jordan, Roll* include an excursus on "Nietzsche's polemics" about the Christian "religion of slaves."[16] This apparent digression may reveal more about Genovese's hidden thoughts than almost anything else he has written. Genovese finds Nietzsche's view in *Beyond Good and Evil*, that Christianity was a religion of slaves, to be compelling but "superficial." Nietzsche taught that Christianity arose among natural as well as conventional slaves (to make an appropriate Aristotelian distinction). The Christian teaching of self-abasement expressed the slave's contempt for his own body, while shaming those with the will and power to command. Christianity was the slave's attempt to inflict guilt upon his master while rejecting a world and a self he could not hope to dominate. Genovese objects to Nietzsche's "one-sided" appraisal of "a religion that carried the ideas of spiritual equality and of the freedom of the will and soul across Europe and the world."

It is curious that a professing Marxist would defend historical Christianity and even criticize Troeltsch and Kautsky for linking Christianity too closely to "political conservatism." Though Genovese concedes that Christianity, like other religions, served to undergird established authority (which Christians were urged to obey), he insists that the core of Christianity was, nonetheless, radically revolutionary: "When it proclaimed a single nature, endowed by God for every man, it also proclaimed all men brothers. In so doing despite every attempt to separate the Kingdom of God from the Kingdom of Man, it illuminated the chasm that separated the equality of men before God from the grim inequality of man before man."

Genovese praises Christianity as a proven force for social justice, and he

15. Bradford makes this point tellingly in "The Strange Career of C. Van Woodward," *The World & I*, Vol. 2 (November 1987), pp. 651-62.

16. Cf. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-63.

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notes its "genius" in the "struggle to reconcile freedom with order, the individual personality with the demands of society."[17]

Yet, he does concede points to Nietzsche as well as Christianity. After all, he accepts the view, as Alain de Benoist has put it, that "Christianity was the Bolshevism of antiquity." Indeed Genovese goes on at length about how the Christian religion of "painful subjection" and utopian brotherhood contained the seeds of later social uprising. Black slave revolts are seen as partly arising from Christian hopes and convictions. It is also fair to say that Genovese restates the attack on Christianity's conservatism in a thoroughly positive fashion. It was Christianity's "genius" to have reconciled freedom and authority, to have made the individual will serve the cause of social order.

These assertions could have been drawn from the elder Hegel expounding on his philosophy of history. They also show affinities to the ethical thinker, Alasdair MacIntyre, who once considered himself at the crossroads of Marxism and Christianity. MacIntyre sees modernity as poised between two cosmological choices that lead out of the current disintegration of values: Nietzschean existentialism and an Aristotelianism colored by medieval Christian nostalgia.[18] The anti-individualist and anti-capitalist MacIntyre has moved from a *sui generis* Marxism to an equally *sui generis* Catholic conservatism; the same thing may yet happen to another hero of paleoconservative intellectuals, Genovese.

Yet, the Marxist legacy may take longer to vanish in his case. And so may the deeply Nietzschean sentiments that are particularly present in Genovese's earliest published work, untouched by concessions to black radicals. Genovese's defense of Fitzhugh, in *The World the Slaveholders Made*, ends with such expressions of sympathy for the slaveholding South that would boggle all but the most doggedly reactionary or exuberantly Nietzschean minds: "Southern slavery and the world-wide slavery Fitzhugh sought were genuinely pre-bourgeois and anti-bourgeois." Moreover, "[s]lavery did constitute a community, however unjustly ordered." Finally: "We should not forget that our liberal, confident, tolerant, and good-natured bourgeoisie, when for once confronted with a determined and powerful internal foe, forgot its commitment to reason together and reached for its revolver."[19]

Although this interpretation of the American Civil War is both provocative and anti-bourgeois, it was certainly not that of Marx and Engels. Both viewed that struggle as one unleashed by a "secessionist conspiracy" of slaveholders.[20]

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17. *Ibid.*, p. 166.

18. See Alasdair MacIntyre's *Marxism and Christianity* (South Bend: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1984); *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (South Bend: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

19. Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

20. See *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Studienausgabe*, Iring Fetscher, ed. , Vol. 2 (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1974), p. 172. Marx maintains, "The war of the Southern Confederacy is no mere defensive struggle, but a war of conquest aimed at the spread and perpetuation of slavery." *Ibid.*, p. 164. Though this statement does not contradict

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On December 12, 1864, Marx, writing on behalf of the International Workingmen's Association, congratulated Lincoln upon his reelection. Marx affirmed the commitment of European workers to the American Democratic Republic locked in a war against an "oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders." He then declared that "as the war for American independence initiated a new epoch of bourgeois ascendancy, so the American war against slavery would begin a new epoch of working class ascendancy."[21]

What may distinguish Genovese's view of the Civil War from that of Marx and Jaffa is the Nietzschean factor. Genovese obviously admires those who sacrificed their lives for the non-bourgeois concepts of "dignity and honor," particularly when "associated with the power to command." Nietzsche, too, who identified master morality with "manly instinct" and heroic fatalism, would probably have shared the same admiration.[22] When the conservative side of Genovese asserts itself, what becomes at once conspicuous is his non-leftist, often Nietzschean appreciation of the flawed heroic and tragically noble. Judged by his sensibilities rather than affirmations of Marxist solidarity, Genovese merits the paleoconservative reverence in which at least half of his life has already been spent. As one of his Southern admirers, Clyde N. Wilson, is fond of noting: "With Gene on the Left and Jaffa on the Right, who the hell can make sense of ideological labels?" The question, needless to say, is rhetorical.

Genovese's presentation of the dynamics of Southern slavery, he nonetheless depicts the war, particularly in *The World the Slaveholders Made*, as one necessitated by the aggressive expansion of capitalism.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

22. Genovese's text of choice in interpreting Nietzsche is *Beyond Good and Evil*. In no way does he seem influenced by the "Leftist Nietzsche" popularized by Michel Foucault. On the Foucaultian transformation of Nietzsche, see Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); and Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975).

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Manfred Frank's Theory of Interpretation

Sabine Wilke

From 1981 to 1983 Manfred Frank delivered a series of lectures subsequently published under the title *What is Neostructuralism?* in which he dealt with the poststructuralist account of meaning.[1] The book demonstrates a somewhat belated entry of German theory into contemporary critical discussions.[2] Frank himself laments the lack of dialogue between French deconstruction and German hermeneutics. His theory of interpretation attempts to mediate between these two critical traditions by reading the poststructuralist theory of meaning through the romantic critique of idealist semantics. According to romantic philosophers, it is not through a process of reflection and objectification that we understand the world and ourselves. Rather, there is a basic familiarity that the self has with itself, and on this basis it knows itself. Frank thus not only criticizes the poststructural paradigm of meaning as reflection and objectification, but he also supports a philosophical tradition marginalized in the history of Western philosophy. His question is: how can we describe the constitution of meaning without depending solely on an all-determining code model? How can we explain the fact that we understand other people and texts without having to derive this understanding solely from a general linguistic structure which makes it possible? At the center of Frank's investigations into the nature of meaning is the dialectic between the individual act of understanding and interpretation and the general structure regulating this act.

In his view, poststructuralism completely abandons the first part of this dialectic. Adorno was concerned with a similar problem, and Frank refers to his

1. Manfred Frank, *Was ist Neostrukturalismus?* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983). References in the text are to this edition; English translation forthcoming in the fall: *What is Neostructuralism?*, trans. Sabine Wilke and Richard T. Gray (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1988).

2. Cf. Andrew Bowie's comprehensive review essay entitled "Individuality and Différance" in *Oxford Literary Review* 7 (1985) pp. 117-30, as well as Robert C. Holub's review in *German Quarterly* 59 (1986) pp. 112-16.

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negative dialectic. In an interesting yet problematic operation, Frank equates Adorno's notion of the nonidentical, which is endangered by the totalizing tendencies in modern society, with his own concept of the individual. In his *Negative Dialectic*, Adorno persuasively argued that identical and nonidentical moments are intricately interwoven in the production of meaning. His negative dialectic is always related to the philosophy of identity; i.e., it has to operate within this model even if it deconstructs it from within since otherwise there would be no ethico-political horizon for the critical movement.[3] In a field of indefinite substitutions and pure differences, the nonidentical would never constitute anything positive. For Adorno (filtered through Frank) this would mean the end of any meaningful critique and the collapse of all critical claims. Frank's translation of Adorno's philosophical argument into semantic problems, however, reproduces in a strange way that which he so critically challenges in poststructuralist theory: he abstracts from the political aspect of Adorno's philosophy and subscribes to the conclusions drawn from his theory of meaning. This depoliticized semiological rewriting of Adorno's concepts of identity and nonidentity puts him in a group with those who defend dialectical thought: next to Adorno's negative dialectic we find Schleiermacher's dialectics, Peirce's semiotics, Lacan's psychoanalytical hermeneutics, and Sartre's reflections on the idiot in society; they all engage in the fight against the idea of pure difference.

In his earlier book on the individual universal, Frank examined Schleiermacher's theory of hermeneutics[4] which explains meaning as the interaction of self-consciousness with its Other, the systematic code. According to Frank, Schleiermacher was not only the first one to analyze this process, but also provided an unsurpassed *systematic* explanation for it.[5] Frank's Schleiermacher criticizes the contemporary tolerance of interpretive and methodological pluralism. Instead, Frank's Schleiermacher tries to formulate a theory which *systematically* explains interpretation as a dialectic between a universal semiological system and an individual act of interpretation. This dialectical model is preferable, for Frank, to a deconstructive model of *différance* which explains meaning as the *effect* of differential relations, since it understands the critical act as *intervention* into the institution of criticism itself. Frank's Schleiermacher functions as the mediator between the sayable (the order of signs) and the unsayable (the anarchy of the individual act of interpretation).[6]

Besides Schleiermacher, it is Peirce, Saussure, and, of course, Sartre, who are called to speak on behalf of a hermeneutics of meaning as intervention.

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3. Cf. *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966). pp. 150f.
4. Cf. *Das individuelle Allgemeine: Textstrukturierung und -interpretation nach Schleiermacher* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977).
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 10ff.
6. Cf. also his "Der Text und sein Stil: Schleiermachers Sprachtheorie," *Das Sagbare und das Unsagbare: Studien zur neuesten französischen Hermeneutik und Texttheorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980), pp. 13-35.

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Frank corrects the image of Saussure, whose concepts of *langue* and *parole* play an important part in poststructural notions of differentiality. The new critical edition of Saussure's works indeed seems to call for a reevaluation of his position on the question of language as a system of pure differences — which is how structuralists and poststructuralists read him.[7] In fact, Saussure appears to have renounced his earlier conviction of the differential and formal nature of language and replaced it with a more complex theory of interpretation in which the individual speaker each and every time has to interpret the individual utterance and inflect it with meaning (*Was ist Neostrukturalismus?*, 98ff., 361). The differential play of language alone cannot produce a meaningful utterance. It is the individual who has to perform a semantic analysis of this linguistic structure. And this interpreting individual is eradicated in poststructuralist conceptions of language as a system of pure differences. In his latest book on the inescapability of individuality, Frank argues that the poststructuralist reduction of meaning to a differential structure fails to explain semantic innovation — indeed all forms of social and political change.[8] His own concept of individuality, on the other hand, not only does what *différance* does — i.e., actively resist the totalizing tendencies of the play of the signifier — but at the same time provide a *motivation* for this process. In Frank's theory, the individual attributes *hypothetical judgments* to a linguistic utterance. Without this attribution of meaning one would have to explain semantic innovation solely from the general code alone.[9] Frank's theory of interpretation builds on a tradition which conceives of the labor of interpretation as political intervention, i.e., an operation which does not leave its object untouched.[10] In this conception, the play of the signifier has to come to a halt at some point to establish a reference. That does not mean, however, that meaning is never subject to reinterpretation. Interpretation is therefore neither an indefinite process of meaning-attribution, nor a fixed and definitive act (549ff.). For Frank, it is not *différance* but the *individual element* (which he borrows from Sartre) which is the greatest obstacle for closure and ideology (555f). This individual element effects semantic change through constant reinterpretation of fixed structures.

Besides his investigation into the linguistic theories of Schleiermacher and Saussure, Frank is interested in the romantic critique of transcendental idealism, where he finds the model for his concept of individuality. Schelling, for example,

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7. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cour de linguistique generale*, Edition critique, Rudolf Engler, ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967), 2 vols.

8. Cf. *Die Unhintergehbarkeit von Individualität: Reflexionen über Subject, Person und Individuum aus Anlass ihrer "postmodernen" Toterklärung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986).

9. For his notion of semantic uncontrollability Cf. his "Die Grenzen der Beherrschbarkeit der Sprache: Das Gespräch als Ort der Differenz von Neostrukturalismus und Hermeneutik," *Text und Interpretation*, Phillippe Forget, ed. (Munich: Fink, 1984). pp. 181-213.

10. Cf. for example, Terry Eagleton, "Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism" *New Left Review* 152 (1985), pp. 69ff, or Fredric Jameson, "Interview" in *Diacritics* 12 (1982). p. 75.

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based his criticism of Kant's dualistic world-view and Fichte's idea of a self-positing subject on an alternative concept of self-consciousness which is opposed to idealism's notion of identity as synthetic apperception.[11] Schelling's notion of absolute identity disputes the fact that self-consciousness is an effect of a relational structure; self-consciousness already has a basic familiarity with itself and does not need to be objectified in order to understand itself. A synthetically constructed self-consciousness, such as Kant's, Hegel's, and Derrida's, must reconcile subject and object: it has to presuppose a dialectical folding back of the subject onto itself through the medium of reflection.[12] Schelling's absolute identity, on the other hand, is not conceived according to the model of reflection; rather, it is prereflexive, i.e., it is the condition of possibility for reflection and meaning. Frank's Schelling therefore addresses the question: how do we conceive of subjectivity after deconstruction? Is it possible to affirm our identity, our self-consciousness, without going back to the model of speculation? In Schelling we have an interesting historical case which seems to suggest that it is possible. In his philosophy of identity, Schelling conceived of the affirmative nature of the absolute as *internal duplication* (*innere Verdoppelung*) in which absolute identity and relational (synthetic) identity are only two sides of an already ambivalent structure.[13] Without the duplicate nature of absolute identity, there is no self-consciousness. Frank uses Schelling's concept of absolute identity to explicate his thesis about the basic familiarity of the self with itself, which serves as the philosophical ground of the individual element in interpretation. It is on the basis of this familiarity that the individual may pronounce hypothetical judgments.

Of course, Frank is not the only one to work on an alternative theory of identity. In Adorno's negative dialectic, it is the mimetic which serves as a corrective to identity-logical forms of rationality. Mimetic thinking alone is insufficient since it is only negatively related to that which it is not. When it loses sight of the logic of identity the nonidentical becomes regressive, i.e., mimesis that mimes the abstract and the general.[14] Only by duplicating its object can mimesis unfold its subversive character.

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11. Cf. Manfred Frank, *Eine Einführung in Schellings Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), pp. 117ff.

12. Rudolphe Gasché has recently presented a different interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of reflection in his book *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986). Gasché supports those tendencies in the early Hegel that lead beyond the model of reflection (Cf. pp. 79ff.). He interprets Hegel's speculative judgment as the model for immanent and non-reflective conceptions of knowledge and meaning.

13. Cf. *Eine Einführung in Schellings Philosophie*, *op. cit.*, pp. 109f, 126f.

14. Cf. Michael Cahn, "Subversive Mimesis: Theodor W. Adorno and the Modern Impasse of Critique," *Mimesis in Contemporary Theory: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, Mihai Spariosu, ed. vol. 1 (Philadelphia and Amsterdam: John Benjamin's Publ. Co., 1984), pp. 27-64.

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Frank's Critique of Neostructuralism

In Frank's critique of the philosophy of deconstruction, Schelling's arguments against mainstream idealism play a crucial role. Many German romantic philosophers and poets (i.e., Fichte, Schleiermacher, Schelling, Novalis) criticized Hegel's philosophy of identity which explains knowledge and self-consciousness according to the model of reflection.[15] As opposed to Gasché, who interprets Hegel within a tradition of negative dialectic, Frank does not believe that Hegel's dialectic ever leaves the paradigm of reflection and the logic of identity. In Frank's view, the romantic philosophers formulated a theory of subjectivity which critically undermined the Hegelian and Derridean model of self-consciousness as reflection and which was consequently suppressed by "Western metaphysics." Frank convincingly argues that the term "Western metaphysics" brings together different philosophical traditions by eradicating their very differences. By way of an example, he elaborates on Schelling's alternative conception of self-consciousness, as shown above. According to Schelling, the self needs a criterion in order to achieve self-recognition; this criterion is, therefore, pre-reflective and absolute. Frank uses this case as a counter-example to the repeated claim that every thinker in the Western tradition has conceived of identity as self-presence. This (Heideggerian and Derridean) claim can only be upheld if one ignores the romantic tradition (237, 333). Frank thus accuses Derrida's use of the term "Western metaphysics" of historical inaccuracy which, as Jameson has argued, is a constitutive factor of theory in the consumer age.[16] What is more, Schelling's alternative construction of identity, in Frank's mind, is better than Derrida's *différance*, because it retains the notion of meaning as intervention.

Frank's argument against poststructuralism's use of "Western metaphysics" leads to a second critique which is more closely directed to the ethical and political components in French theory. Although he agrees with Derrida's point about the fundamental role of difference as the ground of consciousness and meaning, he warns us about some of its consequences. Frank comes from a fairly straightforward political understanding of critical philosophy and critical praxis and does not accept the semiological rewriting of this position. For him, criticism that is not grounded in a determined political action is in effect affirmative of the *status quo*, and he mentions Foucault's genealogical praxis of history and Deleuze and Guattari's schizo-analysis as two major examples for this tendency.[17] The fifty some pages dedicated to the analysis of the two volumes of *Anti-Oedipus* are full of biting commentary. He accuses the two authors of adhering to a dangerous form of anarchism and celebrating modern society

15. Recently William Desmond has argued a similar thesis in his "Hegel, Dialectic, and Deconstruction," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 8 (1985), pp. 244-63.

16. Jameson, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

17. Cf. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1983).

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as a machine in which the subject has no chance for intervention. In a rare cynical moment, Frank compares these texts with the nonsense of punk songs (405). This psychotic style prevents them from formulating a critical position toward their own subject. What Eagleton has called the choice between feminism and fascism here appears as the alternative between critical hermeneutics and apolitical schizo-analysis. The latter fails to formulate a political framework in which to situate the analysis of contemporary society. Schizo-analysis thus emerges as the Other of Frank's archaeology of the subject as the basis for social change. He perceives schizo-analysis as a threat to his own position on the relation between subjectivity and political change.[18] The problem seems to lie in a confusion of different levels: Deleuze and Guattari do not claim to provide a normative theory of subjectivity as Frank thinks. His own understanding of theory as counter-factual praxis operates with a political vision of how society should look. Theories that do not do this are dismissed as unacceptable. His normative posture of a theory modelled on the politically active individual clashes with psycho-analytically and semiologically inflected criticism.

In addition to his critique of the politics of poststructuralism, Frank offers a philosophical argument against Derrida's reading of Husserl's theory of meaning. He can show that Husserl's phenomenology of internal time-consciousness, which is conspicuously absent from Derrida's reflections on that subject, would undermine Derrida's own model of self-consciousness as reflection. The flow of internal time, for Husserl, divides the notion of synthetic consciousness which is part of Derrida's model. If one conceives self-consciousness as a reflection of consciousness, onto itself, one would in effect never be able to achieve consciousness, since the act of reflection would have to continue *ad infinitum*. For Husserl, this internal division within consciousness disrupts the possibility of self-presence and self-consciousness as the result of self-presencing.

Frank's critique of the philosophy of poststructuralism is thus three-fold. First, he notes their incorrect use of the term "Western metaphysics": not all of Western theory explains meaning as self-presence. Second, Frank challenges the politics of poststructuralism and argues for a prescriptive notion of critical theory as a counter-factual praxis. Third, he objects to the deconstructive model of self-consciousness as self-reflection. If one accepts Husserl's (and Schelling's) alternative conception of self-consciousness, one has to give up a reflective model of how the subject knows itself. One problem with Frank's critique, though, is that he only discusses the earlier and more traditional texts of Derrida (and Foucault). Whether Derrida, after *Glas*, for example, still hangs on to a reflective model of self-consciousness, seems doubtful. In any case, deconstructive criticism in this country largely operates on the basis of these early premises of poststructuralism (its abstraction from history, for example; a certain stylistic pathos: an unproblematical conception of the self, etc.) and Frank's arguments are valid in this context.

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18. Cf. "Die Grenzen der Beherrschbarkeit der Sprache," *op. cit.*, p. 210.

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Frank in America

In a review of Frank, Bowie briefly mentions the possibility of looking at Frank's theory of interpretation "in relation to the theories of the Bakhtin school which stress the *active* component in the production of meaning whilst not reducing the process of signification to any kind of psychologism."[19] As opposed to this country, Bakhtin was already widely read in Germany by the early 1970s, in particular his notion of dialogue as the active struggle of competing voices in the production of (literary) meaning. Bakhtin calls the condition which makes dialogue possible heteroglossia. In his introductory remarks to *The Dialogic Imagination*, Holquist defines Bakhtin's use of this term as a "master trope at the heart of all his other projects, one more fundamental than such other categories associated with his thought as 'polyphony' or 'carnivalization.' These are but two specific ways in which the primary condition of heteroglossia manifests itself. Heteroglossia is Bakhtin's way of referring, in any utterance of any kind, to the peculiar interaction between the two fundamentals of all communication."[20] And with these two fundamentals he means a more or less fixed system of codes, on the one hand, and the particular context in which a communicative utterance occurs, on the other.

In his essay on the "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin projects the condition of heteroglossia into the aesthetic structure of the text itself. "The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. . . . The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types . . . and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions."[21] Heteroglossia generates a multiplicity of voices and their interrelationship has to be described as a process of dialogueization. At this point, Bakhtin addresses only the *stylistic* features of the novel, but towards the end of his essay he speculates about a larger context, i.e., the question of language. For him, "an abstract, purely semantic position" can never be the condition that makes this multiplicity of voices possible. On the contrary, heteroglossia must be conceived as a *motivated*, *concrete* and *social* act of interpretation. "A novel is constructed not on abstract differences in meaning nor on merely narrative collisions, but on concrete social speech diversity. Therefore, even that abundance of embodied points of views to which the novel aspires is not a logical, systematic, purely semantic fullness with every possible point of view represented; no, it is a historical and concrete plenitude of actual social and historical languages that in a given era have entered into interaction, and belong

19. Bowie, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

20. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981), p. XIX.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 262-63.

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to a single evolving contradictory unity."[22] Heteroglossia thus emerges not as the condition which makes diversity possible, but as the historical struggle of interacting languages and interpretive positions. Thus a theory of interpretation as motivated hypothetical judgment could clarify our understanding of Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia and dialogization on a more theoretical level. Bakhtin's alternative conception of difference as the multiplicity of concrete social and historical languages exemplifies Frank's understanding of interpretation as motivated judgment and his critique of abstract semantics.

Frank's theory of meaning can furthermore add a theoretical bent to the currently fashionable concepts of heterology and new historicism. Gasché, for example, describes Derrida's deconstructive philosophy as heterology, i.e. as the discourse of an Other, an "alterity that has nothing of an essence or truth. Instead of being *one* essential alterity, it is irretrievably plural and cannot be assimilated, digested, represented, or *thought as such*, and hence put to work by the system of metaphysics."[23] Heterology is "the thought of an alterity, a difference that remains unaccounted for by the polar opposition of source and reflection, principle and what is derived from it, the one and the Other."[24] Heterological thought remains forever "on the margin of what can be meaningfully totalized," constantly threatened by those attempts of traditional philosophical discourse to "domesticate it in the form of its delegates."[25] The negativity and subversiveness of such a notion of heterology, however, rests solely on its marginal position in relation to mainstream philosophy. Michel de Certeau's collection of essays entitled *Heterologies*, for example, ends with a series of reflections on Foucault and his "demystification" of history.[26] Frank and Certeau offer diametrically opposed readings of Foucault's historical genealogy. According to Certeau, Foucault's theory and micro-procedural praxis of writings history "is an effect and a network of these procedures themselves . . . There is no epistemological and hierarchical break between the theoretical text and the micro-techniques. Such a continuity constitutes the philosophical novelty of Foucault's work."[27] This breakdown results in what Certeau considers a subversive operation. In retelling the history of panoptical systems, Foucault at the same time offers a critique of these systems from within. Certeau applauds this retreat of the intellectual behind the veil of other narrative voices and speaks of a "repoliticization" of historical discourse which consists in historicizing history itself and in which other subject-producers of history emerge as "partners in a shared discourse."[28] For

22. *Ibid.*, p. 412.
23. Gasché, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-5.
26. Cf. *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 63-64.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 217.

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Frank, this new history fails to produce a vision of a new politics. What if these voices of other subject-producers tell a story of violent oppression? Do we need to include them simply because they were previously excluded? Does the fact that they were not integrated into mainstream discourse automatically make them into its victims? The mere fact that they were excluded or systematically repressed does not make a statement about their inherent value on which we still have to pass judgment. Such a judgment has, however, no theoretical space in a conception of history as heterological praxis. Frank's critique of Foucault's genealogy of history addresses precisely this point. According to him, the absence of order cannot be conceived. Political struggle never attacked order *per se*, but always a certain kind of order. The poststructuralist idea of the politically subversive nature of semiotic uncontrollability is unacceptable to Frank's more traditional conception of politics as determined negation and intervention.

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Reviews:

Bloch's Philosophy of Hope

Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986). Three volumes, 1419 pp. + xxxiii, $95.

No one before Bloch ever attempted to write a work like *The Principle of Hope*. Moreover, no one *could* write a work like this today even if one wanted to, for three reasons. The first is stylistic. *The Principle of Hope* is a melange of literary forms current in Germany around the beginning of the 20th century, which have since become wholly passé. It is unthinkable that anyone could now sustain, for 1400 pages, a literary style combining the enthusiasms of Romantic and Expressionist prose, with the rigor of Classical philosophical argumentation, the convolutions of dialectical thought, and the intensities of medieval eschatology. Even Habermas — no prose stylist himself — has called attention to the "erratic blocks of hyphenated terminology, [the] luxuriant growths of pleonastic turns, the heaving of dithyrambic breath" which constitute Bloch's style.[1] Taken altogether, these qualities help explain the occasional forcefulness of Bloch's writing.

The second reason is intellectual. It would be impossible to write this book today, because no single individual knows the broad range of things Bloch did. He discusses in some depth, for example, topics as varied as the Egyptian art of dying, Greek Orphism, the philosophical propositions of Anaximander, late-Roman gnosticism, Byzantine mosaics, Renaissance alchemy, Baroque architecture, developments in 19th century chemistry, Rosicrucianism, Alfieri's classicism, public festivals, Brahm's Fourth Symphony, the German Youth Movement, and the philosophy of Zionism. This is only a partial list, probably about one one-hundredth of the topics discussed in greater or lesser detail. In the West today, no educational system, "advanced" or otherwise, any longer trains people to master this sort of knowledge. And it is doubtful that anyone could assimilate all this through private effort. The individual of

1. Jürgen Habermas, "Ernst Bloch — A Marxist Romantic," *Salmagundi*, 10-11 (Fall 1969/Winter 1970), p. 316.

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prodigious learning spanning many fields has long since given way to the specialist. Even if a book like *The Principle of Hope* were attempted today it would almost certainly be written by a committee of *Fachmenschen*, each writing his or her own small section of the whole.

The last reason that a book of this kind could not be written is philosophical. The optimism that runs through its pages is simply unsupportable today. Bloch developed the main contours of his "philosophy of hope" before 1914, and he did not abandon his inherently optimistic outlook when the *belle époche* came to an end. True, his optimism was not the shallow variety found in any number of mid-19th century thinkers. It was much more solidly grounded in modes of thought going back to Aristotle's entelechy, Hegel's progressive dialectic, and Schelling's philosophy of nature. Nevertheless, Bloch's hopefulness seems out of place today, when a pessimistic viewpoint often appears more "realistic." Maybe it is for this reason Benjamin's one-sentence comment on hope — that it is "only for the sake of those without hope that hope is given to us" — sometimes feels truer than any random one hundred pages from Bloch.

Not only is it hard to imagine this book being written today; it is also hard to imagine it being read, *really* read from cover to cover with thorough understanding. My guess is that there are not more than a few dozen people around who can comprehend all that Bloch talks about. His knowledge is simply too encyclopedic. It would take a lifetime of work to understand everything he discusses, and to make matters worse, Bloch exerts no effort to introduce even his most abstruse topics to the general reader. He merely assumes the reader knows the background — which is to say, everything that has been thought and written during the past 2500 years.[2] On page 630, for instance (and this is typical), Bloch makes reference to Brand, Cagliostro, the "Grand Cophta," Balthasar Bekker's *Enchanted World*, Swedenborg, La Mettrie, the Golem Legend, Rasputin, the Rosicrucians, and Hallmann's *Marianne*. On page 1186 (another one chosen randomly), he speaks about subjects as varied as Joseph Smith and Mormonism, Bulwer-Lytton's *Zanoni*, Eduard Meyer on Mohammed, the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, Mme. Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled*, and the "occult journalism" of Rudolf Steiner. Though it is possible to follow the overall direction of Bloch's arguments, few people know enough about all these particular things to evaluate what he says intelligently. It is not even desirable to acquire all this knowledge, since much of it is highly arcane and unlikely ever to be encountered again. But there are important exceptions to this generalization. There are some brilliant short sections within the whole that are remarkable for

2. There is another problem as well. Bloch frequently makes Classical, Biblical, literary and historical references and then creatively recycles them, often in very imaginative ways. But since most readers will miss the original allusion, they will make no sense whatever of the recycling. The result may be complete confusion. For some comments on this, see Wayne Hudson, *The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), p. 2.

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their insightfulness and originality. Whatever else might be said, the labor of writing (or reading) the work is justified by these brief discussions — as, for example, Bloch on the "Egyptian Helen," the daydream as compared to the night dream, "the picture of the beloved," Don Quixote, the utopian content of music, or Marx's Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach.

On picking up Bloch's three weighty volumes, the reader might at first find it difficult to grasp the overall framework of his argument. Instead, one is immediately confronted by a welter of statements and assertions hard to make much sense of. There are gnomic, enigmatic sentences, like those which inaugurate the book ("From early on we are searching. All we do is crave, cry out. Do not have what we want."). There are lyrical outbursts and mystical-romantic effusions. There are excellent passing insights ("It is said that to be free is to be able to choose between two or several things. But the so-called free person has seldom selected the things from which he has to choose."). There are unfounded or unproved assertions ("No art is as socially conditioned as . . . music"). There are statements that manifest an almost willfull opacity: "Art is a laboratory and also a feast of implemented possibilities, together with the thoroughly experienced alternatives therein, whereby the implementation and the result occur in the manner of founded appearance, namely of worldly perfected pre-appearance." There are numerous passages virtually unclassifiable. Still, behind this surface variety is a structure, a direction. It is discernible in five stages, starting from the lowest and most immediate level of the individual (the first sentence is "I move."), and rising ultimately, 1400 pages later, to a discussion of utopian collective longings and their fulfillment in a future subject-object identity (the last word is "homeland"). A quick sketch of these five stages will help make the overall "form" of the work more apparent.

The first stage, and also the material labelled as section one, is concerned with what Bloch calls "Little Daydreams." Here he starts with the smallest things of everyday life — the child's game, the "hiding place," the old man's dream of youth — and from these insignificant beginnings he tries to draw out a concealed utopian content. The second section, about 300 pages long, is entitled "Anticipatory Consciousness." In it Bloch introduces most of his key terms such as the Not-Yet, *Novum*, *Ultimum, Humanum*, Front, tendency-latency, "dreaming forward," and the like. Here, too, he explains in detail the main elements of his philosophy of hope. The third section, "Wishful Images in the Mirror," is relatively short, but turns out to be a masterful exploration in cultural criticism. Shooting well beyond the individual, Bloch begins to investigate the social and cultural forms which shape values and self-understandings. In each of these cultural forms (film, dance, circus, science fiction, etc.) he finds something hopeful, something utopian and forward-looking. Some typical questions he poses: What does it mean when someone tries to make oneself more beautiful (or handsome) than one actually is? What is going on when

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one feels "better" in a new suit of clothes? What needs are being satisfied when an individual avidly follows the film or celebrity magazines? In answering each of these questions, the Frankfurt School would suspect the manipulation of consciousness on the part of the media or the culture industry. While not denying the truth of this, Bloch sees more at work. Inherent within these desires and longings, quite apart from social manipulation, are some important utopian impulses good in themselves, which need to be drawn out and actualized rather than left to be satisfied vicariously (as he thinks is the case within modern capitalism).

The fourth section of the book is labelled "Outlines of a Better World." Here, in an impressive and encyclopedic 450 page *tour de force* Bloch extrapolates the wishful "hope landscape" from virtually every utopian projection from ancient times to the present. Covered in his historical survey are social, medical, architectural, philosophical, geographic, operatic, and artistic utopias. Each was a conscious presentation of *something better*; each conveyed a vision which shot beyond the Reality Principle, and aroused in individuals the "forward dream" of the New which did not yet exist. The fifth and last section, "Wishful Images of the Fulfilled Moment," is another 450 page book within a book. It focuses on the most sublime images of wholeness and completion, particularly as expressed in music and in the world's major religions. Even though this last stage is perhaps the most dense and difficult to understand, the reader should be prepared for it, thanks to the conceptual framework unfolded in the previous 1000 pages. Here, finally, one sees more completely those things which were only vaguely glimpsed in the first section on the phenomenology of everyday life.

Within the overarching structure of this complex work there is an *argument*, or rather a series of interlocking arguments, all of which help tie together the enormous mass of information that would otherwise overwhelm and intimidate. It starts with the familiar notion that there are three ranges of time: past, present, and future. By habit we have usually thought of the present as a *result* of the past. The present is allegedly the outcome of a series of causes and effects leading up to the "now" we are in; it is therefore a consequence, even a *residuum*, of processes set in motion much earlier. If the present appears unsatisfactory, one easy explanation is to blame it on the present's discontinuity with the past, i.e. to claim that the present is off track (or decadent, or "sick," or whatever) because it has cut itself off from what has gone before. This condition of being separated from the past is customarily judged to be "bad," since the past is assumed to be the foundation of everything worthwhile. If the present feels empty, evacuated, or without meaning, there is always an answer ready at hand: *all this is so because it lacks the past*. If people would return to the values of earlier times, the wrongs of the present could be corrected and "right order" restored.

Bloch suggests another perspective: The present is not so much the product of the past as the *point d'appui* of the future. From this pivotal idea follows his

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whole philosophy of hope. At the center of the present is the "moment." Each one of pure immediacy and therefore not explainable in terms of the past; each wholly obscure, a "zone of silence," an *incognito*. At the time it is "lived," each moment is totally dark, simply because it is known so directly and unreflectively. As one gains some distance from it, though, it begins to be "experienced," which is something different than merely being lived. Only when it is truly experienced (i.e., comprehended) can its innermost contents be perceived. When this happens, what becomes clear (at least to Bloch) is that the moment is filled not with residues from the past but with lively anticipations of the future. Every moment contains material that shoots beyond itself, that announces the new still in the process of formation along the forward edges of the present. Put more strongly, every moment contains the *Vorschein*, or "pre-appearance" of what is about to be, so the future is literally already *in* the present, though in undeveloped form.

Another word for this future in the present is the "Not-Yet." There are two kinds of Not-Yets, according to Bloch: there is the Not-Yet which exists in the world (the "Not-Yet-Become"), and there is the Not-Yet that we experience mentally or subjectively (the "Not-Yet-Conscious"). The first refers to all that is immanent in matter, the latencies existing at every instant of time yet to come to fruition. The second refers to half-conscious intimations — to longings, feelings, dreams, and only barely-sensed glimmers of wholeness — which tell us that the world and we ourselves are destined to be more than what we are. When people come to realize that the Not-Yet lies at the heart of every moment, they also see that the world and life-as-it-is *cannot be true*. It cannot be true, not because the present has been severed from the foundational past, but because it is still a long way from the fulfilled future yet to come — and for Bloch only the future still on its way can be completely "true."

In Bloch's view, there is something in all men and women which is aware that what we have in the now is only the Actual, not the Real. This is the reason for the universally-experienced "melancholy of fulfillment": the sense of unhappiness even in happiness, because of the "element of nonarrival in arrival." Of course, the powers-that-be have a vested interest in obscuring the Not-Yet. From Bloch's perspective, they entrench themselves and increase their security to the extent that they convince people that "what is" is all there is. From this position, it would follow that the best approach to life is one of adjustment or "fitting in," since an advantageous adaptation to the given would be the best one could hope for. On the other hand, if the Not-Yet-Conscious residing darkly within individuals could make contact with the Not-Yet-Become of the world, it could help bring into existence the unfulfilled potentiality within things. All being strains forward toward completion. The straining forward in matter is called the "Possible." The straining forward in the individual is called "Hope." If these two elements could come together in

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a common project, each aiding the other, then the world could be driven toward the perfection of its potential at the same time that individuals bring to full consciousness the utopian elements within themselves, including what they can envision for the world at large. In the end, what is really desired is *both* that we externalize what we can imagine, and that we make the world adequate to what we can conceive. In this respect, it is clear to Bloch that just wishing or hoping for a better world is not enough. There must also be a doing, a *praxis*. Utopian images or possibilities need to be concretized through the activity of an historical "We-Subject" which tries to turn the world into something that has so far never existed, i.e., into a true home where, as Marx put it, man is naturalized and nature humanized.[3]

Ideas such as these helped Bloch formulate a unique kind of social ontology — unique, certainly, within the context of Marxism, which is where he placed it. It is an ontology which starts with what is most basic in matter and in man, and that, according to Bloch, is movement, restlessness, the urge forward. To concentrate here on only the human side of this urge, its earliest and most fundamental manifestation is *hunger*. The first pressing need of the infant — a need not merely psychological but physiologically grounded — is the need to acquire food. This impels one forward toward the world in order to fill the emptiness inside; in fact, it is the presence of hunger that creates the elemental energy which later continues to drive one onward and ahead of oneself to achieve satisfaction. After basic hunger is addressed and self-preservation assured, hunger turns into a different kind of yearning: a yearning for self-expansion (wishing, dreaming, desiring, etc.). Now what emerges is the vague "craving of that which is not at hand": the longing for the "I-know-not-what," which Pascal once described as the source of all our unhappiness (that we do not know how to sit still), but which Bloch identifies as an inherently positive impulse leading us on to better things. Still stronger than wishing or desiring is *hoping*, which implies a more specific focus. To hope is to formulate some specific ideals, or to visualize some notion of an end-state, and then to invest oneself in arriving there. But for hope to complete itself, it needs will. When will drives hope onward toward the realization of what is hoped for, it becomes possible for the first time for individuals or collectivities to arrive at their "essence," which is still on the horizon. Grasping the anticipations of this

3. There is another side of Bloch, manifested in parts of *The Principle of Hope* which suggest that the realm of matter might be able to fulfill itself *even without* the help of human beings acting in the world. Here matter is treated as a creative subject in its own right. It is said to be suffused with a teleological direction, something similar to Aristotle's notion of entelechy but on a much broader, more cosmic scale. (This indebtedness to Aristotle is one reason why Bloch, in another work, called himself a "Left Aristotelian." See his *Avicenna und die Aristotelische Linke* [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1952]). Whether the world of matter can ever actually complete itself without the aid of human *praxis* forcing nature forward to its own realization is left unanswered. In any case, Bloch does not doubt that nature can be helped along by human activity drawing out the "possibles" in things.

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essence in the Not-Yet within the present stimulates the urge to act, and this in turn produces an informed Practice bent on making the ideal real. By this stage in his argument, Bloch ends up with an essentially Marxian concept of *praxis*, but he gets there by a most circuitous route.

In all of this, Bloch seems convinced that people act most resolutely and decisively when they see something ahead of them and then reach for it. Basic here is the assumption that to be human is to feel the need to "venture on." Bloch has very little to say in *The Principle of Hope* about an opposite but arguably even more fundamental need: that is, a need which impels us to "venture backward," to recover or restore lost meanings, to achieve some kind of "anamnestic solidarity" with the dead.[4] This brings up the question of what kind of thought Bloch opposes and wishes to replace. The answer is: that which attaches major importance to remembering the past rather than anticipating the future. Predominant since the earliest ages has been a pattern of thought which says that everything significant has *already happened*; it is in the past, and in order to make contact with it, there must be an effort of recollection. If Eliade is correct, this point-of-view was pervasive in archaic times.[5] But it has also been no less pervasive from Homer down to Freud and Heidegger. In nearly every instance, the basic view has been that, in order to get in touch with what is truly meaningful and valuable, it is imperative literally to "re-collect" something that is past or to recover something lost or No-Longer-Conscious. The regnant assumption has been that, if things seem incomplete in the present, it is not because the future has failed to arrive, but because something essential has been misplaced, forgotten, or repressed. Implicit here is the notion that somehow our "Being," or "Essence," or "Home" is in the past, and that we must struggle to find our way back to it. A recent twist to this view is the argument that the urge to return actually produces radical *praxis*. Thompson has indicated something like this in his historical studies on working class radicalism, and in France Certeau has made a similar point: that we are most likely to go into action when we think we will recover something that has been lost.[6]

Bloch wholly disagrees. There is no reason to look back, since there is nothing to be found in the past except what is dead and dying, or what has already been surpassed.[7] Furthermore, a focus on the past tends, he thinks, to make

4. See Christian Lenhardt, "Anamnestic Solidarity: The Proletariat and Its *Manes*," *Telos* 25 (Fall 1975): 133-54. Bloch does give some treatment to this theme in his *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1962; original ed. Zurich, 1935).

5. See especially, Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

6. See E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage. 1963); Michel de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1984).

7. There are, of course, some important exceptions to this. For Bloch, it is still profitable to look back to find the "future in the past." By this he means that it is useful to return to those things in the past that tried to emerge but never succeeded. This would

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one contemplative and reflective; it is more conducive to nostalgic inaction than to a practice designed to bring about the better world waiting to materialize. True, Bloch can agree on the importance of concepts like "Home" or return to "Origins," which are so central to the defenders of traditional modes of thought. But, at the same time, he completely recycles these key terms, turning them into the opposite of what they have customarily meant. "Home," for instance, is something that lies not behind but ahead. It is a place at which we are still trying to arrive, and the "homesickness" we often feel is for a kind of wholeness and belongingness that have not yet occurred.[8] Likewise, the "Origin" is not a foundation in the past but something yet to come, since "true genesis is not at the beginning but the end." These notions represent strikingly new ways of conceptualizing old issues. And yet, not surprisingly, they ultimately dovetail with Marx's view that we are all still in prehistory, that our full humanity remains something yet to be achieved.

In ways reminiscent of Hegel, Bloch often expresses his ideas with a turgidness that seems hardly bearable. But, also like Hegel, he has flashes of brilliance which compel the reader to see everything differently, or perhaps to see something for the first time. There is an excitement and youthful *esprit* in Bloch — a continuous celebration of everything incubating and fermenting in the present — which occasionally sweeps the reader away. Everything can suddenly appear to be full of presentiments and expectations. As far as Marxism goes, Bloch does manage to restore fire and vision to a form of thought which even he admits has moved "somewhat too quickly from utopia to science." Under his influence, something prophetic and anticipatory — a kind of eschatological breeze — is allowed to blow through the house of Marxism, and that on the whole is refreshing.

Nevertheless, there are serious problems in Bloch's philosophy of hope. As mentioned before, it is propelled by an optimism that does not ring true any-

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include those moments when a *Novum* appeared in historical time but never ripened into an *Ultimum*. It would also include all the Not-Yets, the "anticipatory illuminations," and the utopian surplus value (*Überschuss*) contained in the great works of art, literature, or philosophy but never fully concretized in reality. In these cases, something in the past *hinted at* something yet to come, and that is what makes them valuable.

8. This conception is what leads Bloch to re-work the story of Odysseus, the classic account of *nostos*, or the urge to return home. Taking up suggestions from Dante, Bloch supposes that when Odysseus finally arrives in Ithaca, he cannot rest content because he still feels the same restlessness that propelled him outward on his adventures: he still yearns for "something else" or "something more." Nothing actual can satisfy, since the "home" he is seeking (the *Ultimum*) is not the one he finds in Ithaca. So Odysseus and a company of sailors take to their ships again and sail out into the open sea through the Pillars of Hercules, into the Atlantic, and eventually to the outermost reaches of the ancient world. Odysseus becomes a sea-Faust, searching the horizon for the "more" beyond the "is." "[I]n a world which is not yet man's, among men who do not yet have a world adequate to them, the goal has yet to be reached; despite and because of the hazardous straits."

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more, not after Auschwitz, Hiroshima, the Gulag, and all the rest. (Though Bloch wrote his book between 1938-1947, he reworked and revised it in the 1950s, and eventually published the three volumes in East Germany between 1954-1959. There is no evidence that his "militant optimism" was any less pronounced in 1959 than when he published his first book, *Geist der Utopie*, in 1918.) Furthermore, Bloch never seems to doubt that the new is the harbinger of something better. He never seriously entertains the idea that it might be the beginning of something worse than what we have now. This is why he accuses those who resist the new of being petit-bourgeois and unreasonably afraid of innovation. For Bloch, every *Novum* signals the rushing in of an always positive future. It is because of this that he enthuses about ages like the present one, which he thinks has a "feeling for the *Novum* in the extreme . . . [because it] sense[s] what future is, with bated breath, by working to promote what is approaching, the approaching possible." This view represents such a one-sided evaluation of the period we live in that it's hard to say it contains anything of value at all. Finally, there are still many other areas beyond these in which Bloch exhibits profound shortcomings. For instance, his comments on death — admittedly a subject hard to work into a this-worldly philosophy of hope, since our eventual non-existence would appear to cancel out all facile thought about utopian completion — are generally thin and unconvincing. On this topic at least, Bloch lags far behind his *bête noir* and intellectual antipode, Martin Heidegger, and even behind someone like Ernest Becker, whose book, *The Denial of Death*, is an excellent corrective to Bloch's superficial commentary.[9]

Even though *The Principle of Hope* is a philosophical work, it is legitimate to ask what a person actually *does* who advocates and identifies with the militant optimism expressed in it. To the extent that Bloch acted politically on the basis of his ideas, it is obvious that his inclination to hope for the best in nearly every situation blinded him to certain realities — realities he could not allow himself to look at objectively (probably for fear that his entire philosophy might be undermined). His attitude toward the Soviet Union is a case in point. In Bloch's view, the Russian Revolution introduced into the world something novel and unprecedented, an absolute first in human history: the beginnings of a socialist society. But for him it follows that, whatever is new and filled with utopian promise (as the *Novum* of 1917) should not under any circumstances be opposed. Even if the USSR were flawed (which Bloch admitted privately) it had to be defended publicly at all costs, otherwise there would be the danger that a "Possible" would slip away and be lost forever. For this reason, Bloch staunchly defended Stalinism in the 1930s, including the Moscow Show Trials. At a time when many on the Left were defecting, he took the position that, whoever wishes to embrace socialism must embrace Stalinism. Though he never joined the Communist Party (his wife, Karola, was a party

9. (New York: The Free Press, 1973).

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member), he consistently took hard-line stands ("the categorical imperative needs to carry a gun"), defended political terror and repression, or remained silent about many things on which he could have spoken out (as happened earlier at the time of Kronstadt, or later during the East Berlin uprising of 1953). Viewed in retrospect, this may seem morally reprehensible,[10] but it made good sense within the framework of Bloch's philosophy — and perhaps this alone says something telling about the *limitations* of that philosophy.

At this late moment in the 20th century, Bloch's optimistic worldview appears specious. It is easier now to be cautious about any politics of hope which fails to take into account the harshest realities. Like Hubert Humphrey's much trumpeted "politics of joy" in the 1960s, such worldviews (or practices built upon them) can lead into some very dark alleys or very bloody dead-ends. Because of his all-too-optimistic philosophical assumptions, Bloch could not help but see mainly the "good side" of things, and yet that is only half or less than half of what is actually out there.

David Gross

10. Whatever its merits, Bloch's reasoning was simple: without Russia there would be no likelihood of a future communist society; nor for that matter, any hope of successful struggle against fascism in the 1930s. Bloch was not alone in thinking this way. Lukács, among others, also suggested at the time that the only alternative to resolute support for the USSR would be a retreat to the "Grand Hotel Abyss" — a place where intellectuals could withdraw and wring their hands in despair over the anguish of choice. Needless to say, both Bloch and Lukács rejected this alternative as faint-hearted and petit-bourgeois. For them, it could have only one sure consequence: the triumph of fascism. Though in retrospect it seems hard to approve of Bloch's *Realpolitik* on this matter, Oskar Negt may be right in saying that it is best to neither condemn nor exculpate Bloch but simply try to understand his decisions within the context of the times. See Oskar Negt, "Ernst Bloch — The German Philosopher of the October Revolution," in *New German Critique*, 4 (Winter 1975), pp.3-16; and Ernst Bloch, "A Jubilee for Renegades," *ibid.*, p. 17-25.

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Searching for Justice

Derek L. Phillips, *Toward a Just Social Order* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986), 460 pp.

Twenty years ago philosophical justifications of economic democracy would have been superfluous. Democratic and egalitarian values seemed to be universally accepted, and critics focused on the gap between ideals and institutional realities. Today, conservatives argue that increased political participation and reduced inequality are too costly, that what is really needed is capital accumulation and economic growth. A looming economic crisis threatens to generate an even stronger assault on democracy. At any rate, the growing debate about democratic legitimacy reflects fears that liberal institutions might be in trouble.[1]

Derek Phillips swims against the political stream by arguing for market socialism and economic democracy, entailing the extension of welfare rights, redistribution of income, socialization of large firms, and creation of meaningful work. The strong state needed to protect economic well-being is counterbalanced by a semi-autonomous private sector and independent judiciary to protect individual freedom and avoid the pitfalls of command socialism. Phillips argues for "rational" and "universal" moral norms and against a sociological and historical defense he considers much too relativistic to provide adequate moral footing for a just society. He assumes that the Left has failed to provide the moral grounds to defend its values and programs against assault from the Right. He faults mainstream social theory for failing to separate just from unjust societies.

Phillips rejects mainstream sociological methodology (value-neutrality), and criticizes Weber for avoiding normative theorizing and sticking steadfastly to historical-comparative analysis. Weber concluded that domination and coercion are unavoidable features of complex societies and that normative "agreement"

1. Since the mid-1970s, numerous writers have stressed the pressing need to strengthen liberal institutions and find new sources of consensus to cope with a deepening crisis of legitimacy. For example, see Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1978); Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Perennial Library, 1986); Robert Eden, *Political Leadership and Nihilism* (Tampa: University Presses of Florida, 1983); Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975); Michael Ignatieff, *The Needs of Strangers* (New York: Elisabeth Sifton Books, 1986); Arthur J. Vidich and Stanford M. Lyman, *American Sociology* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1985).

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is always at least partially coerced, concealing deeper conflicts of interest between individuals belonging to differentially advantaged status orders and classes. Despite his emphasis on "voluntary" compliance, Weber, like Marx, treated legitimacy mainly as justifying inequality and upholding structures of domination. He could not imagine any condition that would cause leaderships to willingly turn over the reins of power and wealth to the masses. Consequently, he treated the ideals of voluntaristic integration and just society (particularly, market socialism) as pipe dreams. In contrast, Phillips believes that market socialism is a realizable goal, and that a normative conception of democratic legitimacy, distinguishing just from unjust societies, is necessary to help bring the socialist order into being.[2]

Phillips relies on Alan Gewirth's argument that freedom and well-being are "generic rights," because they are necessary for successful actions, and that every actor must recognize that all others share the same rights.[3] The Gewirthean categorical imperative stipulates that individuals not only ought to avoid interfering with other rights but, in addition, they "have a duty to contribute positively to the well-being of others. . ." (98). Phillips stresses that the effective exercise of generic rights depends on adequate material goods, and that responsibility for fulfilling these needs has ethical primacy. Since well-being is a condition for substantive freedom, moderate restrictions can be placed on freedom for the sake of well-being. In this way, Phillips prevents conservative critics from turning his argument against itself (by attacking progressive taxation, limited property rights, public goods, etc. in the name of freedom). Yet, as demonstrated in his discussion of law, he does not provide any license for oppression in the name of well-being. Throughout, he keeps social justice squarely in sight, and escapes the formalistic dead ends of normative theories that express costless harmony in pristine theoretical spheres.

Consistent application of the generic rights to the areas of socialization, law, and economy yields Phillips' standard of normative legitimacy. To elaborate his position, he criticizes the theories of Gewirth, Nozick, Rawls, Dworkin, Habermas, and Kohlberg, among others. He contends that only a rationally justified, *universal* conception of normative legitimacy eliminates all possible rationales for denying individuals or entire social strata their generic rights. A

2. Phillips argues that the Weberian conception of legitimacy is uncritical, because it cannot distinguish between just and unjust societies. Habermas had earlier criticized Weber similarly. See Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-110; *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), pp. 199-205; *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), pp. 243-71. But, for Phillips, normative legitimacy is based on explicit, substantive, normative standards (pp. 298-306), whereas for Habermas it is limited to procedural, communicative norms.

3. See Alan Gewirth, "Moral Rationality," Lindley Lecture reprint (Lawrence, KS: Univ. of Kansas, Philosophy Department, 1972), pp. 7-11, 19-20; *Reason and Morality* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978); *Human Rights: Essays on Justification and Applications* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982).

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Dworkin-type, historically-derived conception of democratic legitimacy, based on the "moral background" of a specific society, fails to eliminate these exceptions and thus does not provide sufficiently strong grounding for a just society.[4] Phillips believes that rational justification and universalist (i.e. normative) argumentation enhance the capacity of norms "to gain widespread public support." In fact, rational consensus about moral norms must be achieved to realize the authentic, voluntary social integration and to avert legitimacy crises. But it is not at all clear how Phillips' defense of moral norms will make a difference in places where reason and logic do not ordinarily rule. Gewirthian universalism may be convincing to some philosophical audiences, but it is not appropriate for the broader community implied by Phillips.

Moreover, Phillips neither considers the relation of these norms to the requisites of technical and economic organization nor the possible unintended, negative consequences of their application. For example, a proposed just distribution system or work process that commands perfect social consensus might undermine productive efficiency and abundance. The strong state required for redistributive restructuring might eliminate countervailing powers and cancel generic rights. Market conservatives may accept the desirability of freedom and well-being, but rule them out in this world on the basis of their alleged consequences. Phillips' ethical universalism has little to say about such matters and is thus powerless against conservative "realists."

Weber's views about perpetually-coerced consensus and enduring domination preclude Phillips' concept of legitimacy and, perhaps, any form of critical

4. Two types of moral universalism are confused by Phillips. The first expresses merely what is inherent in the modern concept of morality; i.e., that moral action is based on "objective" considerations beyond the specific wants of the individual, and invokes principles that apply in all like cases. However, single human actions may have multiple moral meanings (e.g., saving a life may entail telling a lie), and call up different moral appeals and moral justifications. Consequently, moral "reasonableness" requires an openness to complexities and ambiguities, and judicious reflection about the range of moral arguments that pertain to specific cases. In this attitude, "universal" ethical principles provide a basis for moral discourse and have a civilizing influence on conflicting interests, but they do not guarantee resolution of disputes or establishment of moral consensus, nor are they contradictory to the moral diversity or to the historicist worldview of modernity. On the other hand, Phillips' transhistorical concept of normative legitimacy and his critique of historicism and sociologism imply a sterner form of universalism based on claims about the moral and social primacy of specific substantive norms and about their binding moral authority across an unspecified, broad range of social situations. Here the aim is to establish commands for action, not to stir reflection about the moral ambiguities of specific cases. Although Phillips implies both types of universality, the second type is at the heart of his argument about overcoming relativism and establishing moral standards. For a critical analysis of the open vs. dogmatic form of universality, see Arthur Edward Murphy, *The Theory of Practical Reason* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1965), pp. 271-301. See also John Dewey and James Hayden Tufts' *Ethics* in *John Dewey: The Later Works 1925-1953*, Vol. 7 (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 1985), pp. 275-83.

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theory. But Phillips overlooks the implications of Weber's separation of fact and value, and is mistaken about his alleged objectivism.[5] Weber believed that a demarcated factual sphere perpetuates an openness to disconfirming evidence and promotes critical reasoning about the consequences of value choices. This, however, does not expel ethical matters from either scientific practices or policy decisions. Since debates over political and economic democracy hinge on value-relevant factual matters (i.e., the consequences of policies), these kinds of arguments must be convincing on instrumental as well as ethical grounds. By rejecting historically-based critical standards and criticizing the fact-value separation, Phillips diminishes the means for keeping his strong ethical position honest. Without such a balance, normative theory is threatened with irrelevance or with becoming ideology.

Although Gewirthean generic rights eliminate exceptions to the rule of morality, such universal moral norms are necessarily abstract. Phillips never considers the problems of interpretation and application. Universality does not prevent selective and inconsistent application of moral norms. Even when the moral choices should be clear, individuals still find room to rationalize bad behavior on the basis of lofty ideals of love and brotherliness, as leadership strata sometimes drape oppression with universalistic symbols of democracy and justice. Should moral consensus be the aim of a critical normative theory? This is neither necessary nor desirable. Preaching about the need for moral agreement resembles rhetorics aimed at upholding existing authority. Economic democracy can arise from political compromises during periods of national reconstruction or from experiences of empathy and understanding characteristic of a renewal of community identification, but is not likely to arise from a rational consensus about ultimate values.

Phillips speaks warmly about the pragmatist ideal of communication community, but pragmatists do not presume value consensus. Rather, they imply a climate of moral reasonableness and openness to moral diversity and moral ambiguity. Instead of making universalistic claims about specific ethical precepts, pragmatists describe the emergence of deeper moral understanding based on the capacity of modern people for historical valuation and assessment

5. Phillips (38-39) oversimplifies Weber's view of science, exaggerates his claims about the gulf between fact and value, and misrepresents Weber. By ignoring Weber's "value-relevance," "cultural significance," and "value-analysis," he overlooks the fact that Weber was aware that values and interests constitute facts and provide the basis for selecting the content to be studied by empirical science. Contrary to Phillips' view, Weber understood that arriving at consensus about scientific questions, methods and data is no easy task. Phillips' critique of Weber should have instead targeted the vulgarized version of "value-neutrality" of contemporary social science, which also drops the Weberian value dimension. He conflates Weber's approach with today's conventional textbook wisdom. In reality, there is overlap between Weber's view of scientific knowledge and Phillips' (pp. 42-44). See Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (New York: The Free Press, 1949).

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of consequences. They believe that chances for democracy are enhanced, not by agreement over abstract ends, but by the ability of individuals to identify sympathetically with the divergent interests of a plurality of impersonal others, to share their differentiated attitudes, and to modify action in accordance with these understandings.[6] Potential for sympathetic understanding of the needs of others is enhanced by socal complexity, value differentiation, and the relativization of traditional morality. This is why Mead argued that the modes of cooperative action in specialized organizational roles and in "economic exchange" facilitate the development of a "universal" communication community more effectively than the moralism of "neighborliness" and "religion."[7] However one views their approach to modernity, the pragmatist themes of mutual cooperation, identification, sympathy, and understanding express essential features of moral community and seem closer to life than the rationalist emphases on normative justification and value consensus.

A discussion similar to the one provided in Bellah's (et. al.) *Habits of the Heart* could have provided Phillips' formalistic normative standards some substance and force. But because it is not connected determinately to the experiences and needs of an actual "community of memory," Phillips' standard of legitimacy suggests a greater inclination even than Habermas' to seek critical grounds outside history. If the historical forms of democratic values are in such bad shape, how can a defense of their universality resurrect them? Rather than Phillips' abstract universalism, a more modest position that stresses the reasonableness and decency of freedom and well-being, and that makes reference to the historical expressions of these values is likely to be more effective than an appeal to their universality and rationality. Immanent critique, animated by pragmatist openness, is a more desirable approach. It focuses on systems of value in living traditions, communities, and institutions.[8] Phillips seeks a higher ground, but ignores the interplay between values and historically-experienced needs. Attainment of normative purity comes at the risk of becoming trivial and sounding foolish. The fact that Phillips escapes both these plights is not due to his philosophical arguments; rather, his arguments are meaningful because the ideals of freedom and well-being are still very much alive and have been spread nearly

6. See George H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 317-328; and Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 344-50. For a different analysis of the new forms of solidarity stimulated by modernity and social differentiation, see Georg Simmel, *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations* (New York: Free Press, 1964), pp. 172-84.

7. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-317, 379-389. Mead's universalism differs from Phillips.' Mead is referring to generalized role-taking capacity (the ability to put oneself in the place of others and to share their diverse attitudes) and not moral precepts that hold in all cases, or ethical consensus.

8. Arthur E. Murphy (*The Theory of Practical Reason*, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-30) defends historical morality against the universalist critique of relativism. Murphy criticizes the divisive effects of moral rhetorics that claim to have the authority of universal truth (pp. 329-52).

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worldwide with the advance of modernism. Yet these ultimate values are not enough. The real problem is one of locating determinate conditions that favor the expression of these ideals in everyday social and political life, and of devising strategies that bring nascent possibilities for pacification more fully into being. Sometimes normative theories do contribute to emancipatory ends by pointing to matters too often neglected and by stirring ethical concerns that strengthen the will to act in the cause of concrete justice. Though his search for ethical certainty is futile, Phillips counters the univocal hyperempiricism of the social and behavioral sciences. His account of rights amplifies a culturally significant dimension of critical historical valuation. On these accounts, *Toward a Just Social Order* may be helpful.

Robert Antonio

Romantic Liberalism

Nancy L. Rosenblum, *Another Liberalism: Romanticism and the Reconstruction of Liberal Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 225 pp.

Another Liberalism is unlike most recent works in American political theory. It is not a history, though the author displays an extensive knowledge of the literature, and it is not an exercise in analytical political philosophy, though the author is clearly concerned with the articulation and application of concepts. Rather, it is an eclectic, provocative essay addressed to contemporary liberals and their critics. Professing sympathy for both, Rosenblum would make peace between them by fusing what she calls the critics' "romantic" sensibilities and the legal-rational imperative of liberal theory. The result, in her words, is "another liberalism."

Unhappily, Rosenblum is altogether too vague when it comes to defining her starting point. Liberalism is not a single theory of politics but a broad family of theories rife with internal dissension and intergenerational conflict. The seminal figures in the liberal tradition are distinguished from one another by their differences over subjects of vital importance, including religion, human nature, rights, the social contract, utility, property, and constitutionalism. For almost four centuries, much of the argument *about* liberalism has occurred *within*

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liberalism. Rosenblum, however, is exclusively concerned with the sort of external criticism that verges on caricature. In the "romantic" critique, as she understands it, liberalism is faulted for not taking "individuality, spontaneity, and expressivity" into account. Liberal political society is "cold, contractual, and unlovely — without emotional or aesthetic appeal." It is this defect that Rosenblum's reconstruction of liberal theory is designed to remedy.

There is no denying that the romantic critique captures some versions of liberal theory. Bentham's political philosophy, about which Rosenblum has written a previous book, is an obvious candidate. Of Bentham's philosophy Mill wrote, "it can teach the means of organizing and regulating the merely *business* part of social arrangements." Bentham, in Mill's view, "committed the mistake of supposing that the business part of human affairs was the whole of them." This is the stuff that gives rise to caricature. Mill, on the other hand, was certainly no one-dimensional thinker. To the contrary, he was an eloquent champion of individuality and the rich diversity of human potential. Indeed, he appears in *Another Liberalism* as having pointed the way toward a reconciliation of liberalism and romanticism. Yet, if this is the case, what need do we have of still "another" liberalism?

The problem Rosenblum confronts has less to do with the content of liberal theory than the character of modern society. It is modern mass society in which the individual is reduced to a cipher that haunts the romantic imagination. Romanticism responds to the sense of alienation that follows on the demise of traditional society. It protests against the seeming insignificance of human life in a universe suddenly devoid of ultimate meanings. It rebels against social conformity and bureaucratic regimentation. Insofar as liberalism played a part in shaping the modern world, it must assume a share of the blame for what we dislike about modernity. But liberal theory did not create modern mass society, and the reform of liberal theory will not by itself ameliorate the modern condition. How could we think otherwise, when alienation and bureaucratic repression thrive in countries without a liberal political tradition?

The curious feature of *Another Liberalism* is that it has nothing to say about the structure of modern society or of the contemporary liberal state. Instead, Rosenblum focuses on our perceptions of liberalism. Her problem is to demonstrate that liberalism can accommodate our frustrated "romantic longings" and thereby gain emotional depth and a new loveliness. "If political theory is to effectively justify political life and reconcile men and women to it, then it must address felt needs. Romantic liberalism does." We may rightly wonder, however, if the justification of political life is the first or most important task facing political theory. Surely, men and women ought not be reconciled to oppression or taught to endure exploitation without protest. And yet, if the romantic critique is even partially valid, the modern liberal state (and, more broadly, liberal civil society) is ineluctably tied to the suppression of all that is unique about the human self, establishing anonymous individualism in place

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of self-expressive individuality. Rosenblum's "romantic liberalism," then, is a marriage of opposites, an ideological absurdity that (if believed) would mask the underlying institutional structure and social reality of the liberal state.

My objection is not, however, that Rosenblum fails to take the romantic critique seriously. On the contrary, I think she takes it more seriously than it deserves. As her discussion of romanticism makes abundantly clear, the romantic is terribly self-indulgent. The heroic posturing associated with romantic militarism and the morose sentimentalism evoked by the romantic "law of the heart" lead nowhere. These futile acts of resistance against the soullessness of bourgeois civil society end only in narcissistic self-absorption or radical disillusionment and "inner exile." The romantic self is a petulant child given to tantrums and sulking. I cannot imagine why anyone serious about politics would want to take this child as a model. Rosenblum certainly does not; nonetheless, she is drawn to the romantic self's assertion of its own uniqueness in a world of colorless conformity. She wants to preserve this romantic perspective in a mature setting, tempering romantic excess with responsible politics, respect for rights, and the discipline of legalism.

Rosenblum describes three principal types of "another liberalism," adding that her typology is probably not exhaustive. ("There may be other versions I have missed," she writes.) Her three types are "heroic individualism," "shifting involvements," and "communitarianism." Romantic, liberal, heroic individualism "makes self-expression the premier impulse and seeks outlets for the sense of infinite possibility in public and private life." Rosenblum illustrates this type by reference to Thoreau, who withdrew to Walden Pond in order to live for himself and as an example to his fellow citizens. Yet Thoreau's deliberate refusal to participate in politics, or even to acknowledge the significance of the state ("the government does not concern me much, and I shall bestow the fewest possible thoughts on it") makes him seem an unlikely hero for political theory. While it takes courage to defy social conventions and majority opinion, as Thoreau did, it takes even greater courage to challenge the *status quo* constructively by elaborating an alternative. Thoreau, in the fashion of an alienated romantic hero, elected to retreat instead. This may have been a viable option in the mid-19th century, when the state was far less powerful and society less extensive, but it hardly seems so today. Of course, if most of us can no longer afford a cabin in the woods, we can still retreat psychically by attending only to our private lives and pretending to ignore the intrusive presence of politics. Thus heroic individualism seems a recipe for political apathy. In Rosenblum's astute summation, this vision is "isolating and solipsistic."

Communitarianism fills the void not addressed by heroic individualism. "The challenge of repairing the communitarian failings of liberal thought is somehow to conceive of community without appealing to examples of all-consuming public spirit such as ancient Greek citizenship or revolutionary republicanism with its Jacobin fervor, without idealizing primitive communities, and without

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resorting to organicism." This is a tall order. Represented among recent political theorists by MacIntyre, Sandel, Taylor and Walzer, communitarian critics of liberalism come in for heavy criticism by Rosenblum. They are faulted, among other things, for "embedding" the self too thoroughly in the community, such that the individual disappears in the collective life of the group; for positing a common good independent of the choices made by free (and disparate) individuals in accordance with their personal life-plans; and for demanding a degree of loyalty tantamount to absolute submission to the community from its members. Objections of this sort have been raised by other critics of the new communitarianism, and it is impossible to address all the issues they raise in this review. Suffice it to say that they have a strong case. A unified political community marked by powerful feelings of social solidarity, common beliefs, and shared practices is incompatible with the attenuated social relationships, ideological pluralism, and diverse practices characteristic of ethnically and racially mixed societies. What Rosenblum misses, however, is that the desire for community may represent something more than a romantic longing to belong. The object of communitarian politics could be to overturn the received understanding of civil society as the authoritative model for social life in the liberal state. In seeking to incorporate communitarian aims into liberal theory, Rosenblum overlooks their fundamentally subversive intent.

Community is only safe for liberal theory if it is watered down to mean the emotional satisfaction of group membership. Rosenblum makes this sense of community one of the chief accomplishments of "shifting involvements." This is her favored type of "another liberalism." Here the longing for community is satisfied through participation in multiple voluntary associations, none of which may exercise an exclusive claim to the loyalty of its members. At the same time, multiple memberships provide the individual with multiple opportunities for personal fulfillment. To Rosenblum this seems the best of all possible worlds. Shifting involvements make possible individuality without atomizing individualism, diversity without division, and community without commitment. "Here longings for plenitude converge with pluralism and liberty." This type of reconstructed liberalism is appealing "because nothing is lost." But she is wrong. Ways of life that do not conform to her cosmopolitan ideal are lost, or at the least stigmatized for remaining parochial. What Rosenblum has done is to make the secular, peripatetic life of the American middle class the approved model for all. Romantic liberalism turns out to be a Yuppie political philosophy.

Another Liberalism is not the definitive answer to liberalism's critics, but that was probably not its author's intent. The book is marvelously provocative and designed to incite as much as persuade. Even readers who disagree with Rosenblum will enjoy arguing with her book and will profit from the encounter.

Stephen L. Newman

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Carl Schmitt

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Complexio Oppositorum
Über Carl Schmitt

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Dieser Band dokumentiert das Sonderseminar, das im Oktober 1986 an der Hochschule für Verwaltungswissenschaften Speyer stattfand unter dem Arbeitstitel: „Carl Schmitts Stellung in den Rechts- und Geisteswissenschaften des 20. Jahrhunderts." Carl Schmitt (1888 - 1985), dessen Schriften wohl zu den anregendsten gehören, die in diesem Jahrhundert aus einer deutschen Juristenfeder gekommen sind, und der wie kein anderer Jurist über die Grenzen seines Fachs hinaus griff und hinaus wirkte, war zum ersten Male Thema einer organisierten Zusammenkunft von Fachleuten ... Der fachsprengenden, internationalen Wirkung der Thesen und Schriften Carl Schmitts entsprach auch die Zusammensetzung dieses Sonderseminars.

Mit Beiträgen von *H. Quaritsch,* Speyer; *E. Frhr. v. Medem,* Düsseldorf, *E. R. Huber,* Freiburg; *P. Tommissen,* Grimbergen; *M. Nicoletti,* Trient; *A. Mohler,* München; *K. Kröger,* Gießen; *W. Nyssen,* Köln; *G. Maschke,* Frankfurt; *E. Kennedy,* London; *G. Miglio,* Mailand; *E.-W. Böckenförde,* Freiburg/Karlsruhe; *J. H. Kaiser,* Freiburg; *G. L. Ulmen,* New York; *P. Pasquino,* Mailand; *J. Freund,* Straßburg; *J.-L. Feuerbach,* Straßburg; *H. Lübbe,* Zürich; *G. Schwab,* New York; *J. W. Bendersky,* Richmond; *M. Shiyake,* Kyoto; *B. Kal,* Pusan; *H.-J. Arndt,* Heidelberg; *R. Mußgnug,* Heidelberg; *P. Schiera,* Trient; *Ch. Meier,* München; *V. Neumann,* Frankfurt; *B. Willms,* Bochum.

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Meuschel, Süss, Honneth, Kallschauer, Herf, Frankel, Hirsch, Pohrt, Shapiro, Kane, Luke, Habermas, Komarov, Berman, Adorno

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Cohen, Lipietz, Portelli, Bongiovanni, Shryock, Mothé, Kesselman, Zukin, Gonzales, Raulet, Touraine, Birnbaum, Lefort, Foucault, Gorz, Viveret, Hassner

54 Terrorism and State Terrorism

Corradi, Anderson, Staniszkis, Johnstone, Bobbio, Michnik, Elias, Horkheimer, Kovel, Charwat, Michnik, Berman, Jacoby, Mattick

52 On Social Movements

Eder, Cohen, Bobbio, Song, Balbus, Adler, Tertulian, Dutschke, Herhaus, Leibfried, Armanski, Svitak, Bookchin, Berman, Lee, Herf, Sica, Breines, Ehrlich

51 Peace Movements and the Polish Crisis

Arato, Bahro, Benhabib, Berman, Brandt, Breines, Castoriadis, Cohen, Diner, Gorz, Frankenberg, Hassner, Kuron, Michnik

50 Symposium on: the Role of Intellectuals in the 1980s

Piccone, Zaslavsky, Arato, Minsky, Gross, Whitebook, Pütz, Fekete, Söllner, Papke, Manion, Visor, Zerzan, Luke, Hardway

49 On Habermas

Habermas, Benhabib, Löwy, Zerzan, Landes, Buhle, Kogawa, Lowenthal, Freese, Maraklia, Ludes, Sica, Cohen, Jacoby, Rée,Breines, Finocchiaro, Aronson, Roelofs

47 Poland and the Future of Socialism

Arato, Bauman, Carlo, Michnik, Pomian, Mazowiecki, Wojcicki, Damus, Svitak, Swidlicki, Mink, Kuron, Hegedüs, Elshtain

44 On Narcissism Tribute to Sartre

Alt, Hearn, Jacoby, Aronowitz, Ewen, Kovel, Elshtain, Piccone, Lasch, Rybalka, Rossand, Lévy, Aron, Althusser, Glucksman

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